

Reader's digest



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Reader's digest

HOURS
OF GREAT
READING

Old-Time **DOCTOR REMEDIES** *That Work!*

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MY STORY A Family's Transgender Journey

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Our Readers' Unforgettable Holiday Tales

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Reader's digest



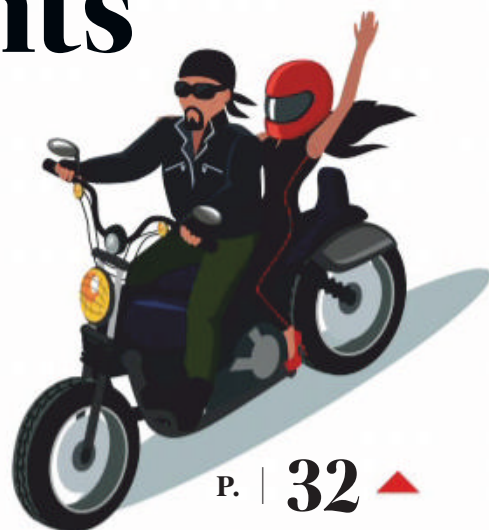
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Editor's Note


Holiday Highs

HOLIDAYS ARE WHAT WE ALL WORK HARD FOR, carefully planning and saving to make sure everything is perfect. Often, that precious time out from our routine can give us some of the most unforgettable experiences – stories that are shared and retold countless times. When we asked our readers to share their most hilarious and memorable holiday mishaps, nothing prepared us for the enormous response. After sifting through the many submissions, we found the most relatable and compiled each into '14 Travel Mishaps You'll Never Forget' (page 32). My favourite involves one reader's visit to the zoo, and her unexpected encounter involving an elephant and a packet of biscuits.

On a more serious note, space and science fans will enjoy the compelling first-person account of astronaut Scott Kelly's time on the International Space Station in 'A Walk in Space' (page 116). Clambering outside the space station, which travels at an orbital height of 408 kilometres above planet Earth, is definitely not on my bucket list. But Scott Kelly's composure as he steps out into the depths of the universe with a space suit as his only protection, is truly remarkable.

While on the topic of the stars (or thereabouts), this month we're launching our first Horoscope column (page 126). Regardless of what zodiac sign your birthday falls under, we hope you'll enjoy this new column by Janice Jones.

Whatever your reading interests, this month's issue has something to delight, thrill and amuse.



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Send in your real-life laugh for
Life's Like That or All in a Day's
Work. Got a joke? Send it in for
Laughter Is the Best Medicine!

Smart Animals

Share antics of unique pets
or wildlife in up to 300 words.

Reminisce

Share the tales of an event from
your past that made a huge
impact in 100–500 words.

My Story

Do you have an inspiring
or life-changing tale to tell?
Submissions must be true,
unpublished, original and
800–1000 words – see website
for more information.

Letters to the editor, caption competitions and other reader submissions

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Letters

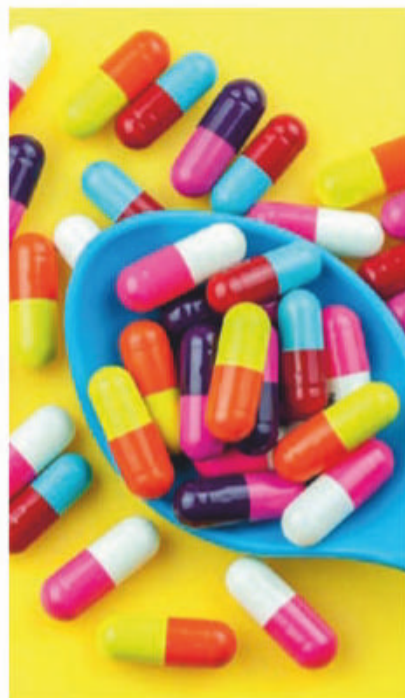
READERS' COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

The Placebo Effect

'The Power of Fake Pills' (February) made me wonder whether the results for medical trial participants from placebos, comes from the chance to be listened to and heard, not just moved on.

At routine follow ups the patient has the opportunity to tell their story as more time is allocated permitting meaningful discussions with the medical staff – possibly even a team who can pool their knowledge to respond to any issues that may arise. To think that when somebody is interested in you and really cares about the outcome, can harness self-belief, even without any drugs being administered.

VIV BROWN



The Wonderful World of Walt Disney

Thank you for the wonderful article on the film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* ('Unforgettable Snow White', January). In the winter of 1937, my parents heard that the film was coming to Nyah Hall in northern Victoria, and thought it would be a great opportunity for their four

youngsters to see it. They ended up taking the entire school of 11 pupils.

My parents, pioneer farmers, prepared our 1928 Chevrolet truck for the excursion: a stock crate was added for safety, a cross plank for seating, and blankets for warmth. Hot pies followed the most wonderful experience of our young lives.

In 1986 we all met up again for a

LET US KNOW If you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 5 for how to join the discussion.

reunion and vividly remembered that day, especially the magic of Walt Disney.

EILEEN WATSON

In Love Again

'Shakespeare's Enduring Legacy' (December) has again shown that Reader's Digest is a one-of-a-kind magazine. As a teenager I admired Shakespeare, and the more I read, the more I fell in love with the dramatic plots, twisted relationships and language. This article has made me fall in love with William Shakespeare all over again.

FATIMA AHTESHAM

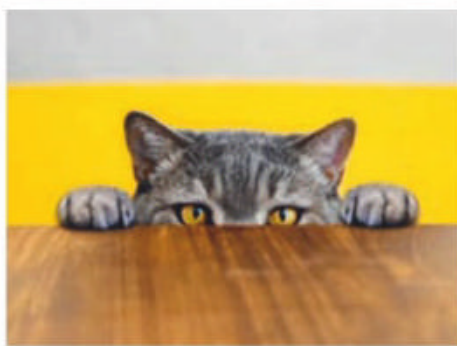
Brain Boosters

After reading 'Wake Up Smarter' (February), I challenged myself to follow the steps outlined in the article. I've started a new job and am enrolled in a TAFE course, so a boost to my brain power will be helpful. I'll let you know how it goes.

ELLEN GORDON

WIN A PILOT CAPLESS FOUNTAIN PEN

The best letter published each month will win a Pilot Capless Fountain Pen, valued at over \$200. The Capless is the perfect combination of luxury and ingenious technology, featuring a one-of-a-kind retractable fountain pen nib, durable metal body, beautiful rhodium accents and a 14K gold nib. Congratulations to this month's winner, Eileen Watson.



Eyes on You

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

Do you ever get the feline you are being stalked? **SARAH FITZPATRICK**

Peeping Tom! **ROBIN BOWMAN**

I am paw-sitive that I did not have anything to do with the dog being gone. **RUSSELL BRIMS**

Luckily, Oscar could always rely on his escape claws. **VANESSA SEALY**

Cat-scan detects fishy business. **SIMON JAMES DHANARAJ ARTHUR**

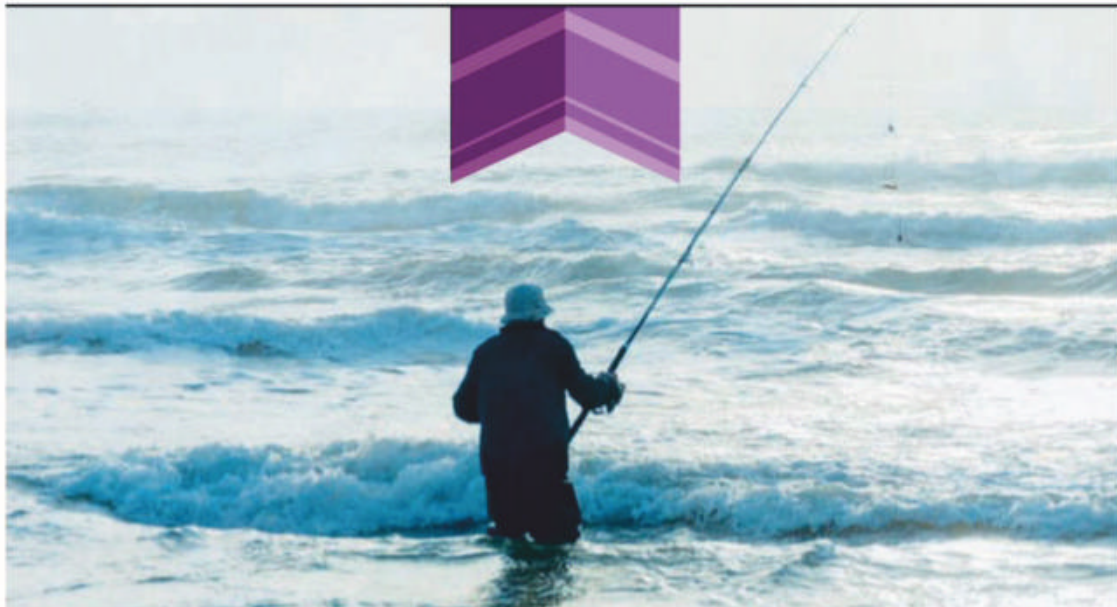
Congratulations to this month's winner, Sarah Fitzpatrick.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, see the details on page 5.

News Worth Sharing



Fisherman Makes Catch of a Lifetime – and Saves a Life

Early one morning in October last year, Gus Hutt was fishing at a favourite spot at Matata Beach in New Zealand's North Island's Bay of Plenty. Spotting what he thought was a porcelain doll floating past, he reached out to grab it by the arm.

When he heard a 'squeak', Hutt realised it was an 18-month-old baby boy, who was floating at a steady pace, pulled by a dangerous rip in the

water. Hutt's wife searched the nearby holiday camp to find the child's parents. Until the alarm was raised, they didn't realise their toddler, Malachi Reeve, had opened the zip of his sleeping parents' tent. The inquisitive toddler had gone exploring onto the beach and, unfortunately, into the ocean. Malachi was treated by paramedics and is completely fine. Hutt is now an unexpected hero with a story about the catch of a lifetime.



“Never look back in regret – move on to the next thing.”

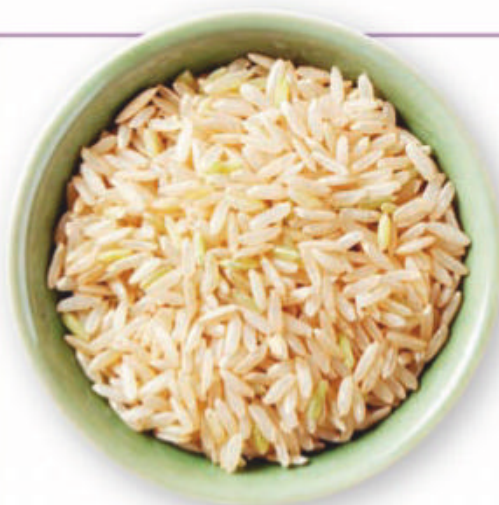
RICHARD BRANSON'S BEST ADVICE FROM HIS MUM

COMPILED BY KATHY BUCHANAN

AI System Correctly Predicts Which Coma Patients Will Wake Up

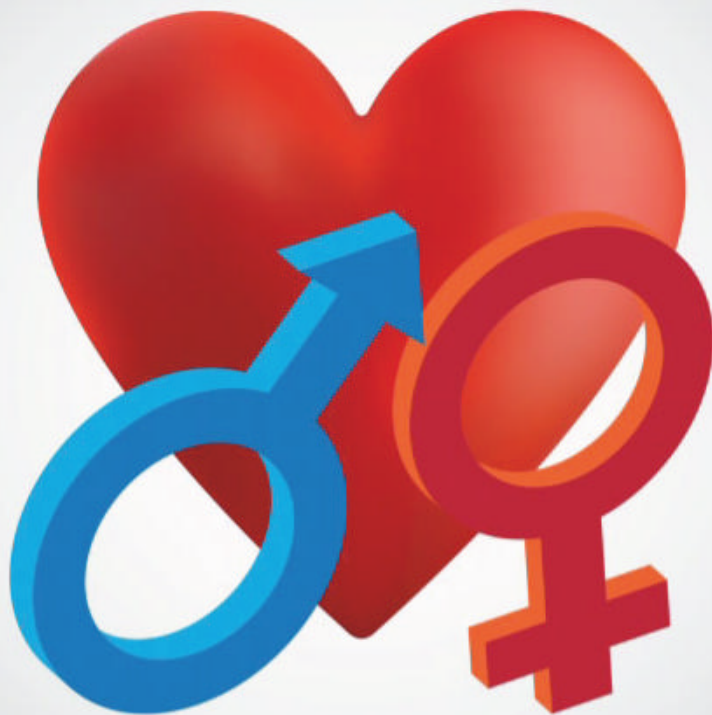
Amazing results have been achieved in Beijing, China, by a team of neurologists who used an artificial intelligence (AI) system to rate seven patients on a coma recovery scale. Despite the low scores the patients had received from doctors, meaning family members were legally allowed to take them off life support, the AI system from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and PLA General Hospital gave top scores to the patients. Their prediction? All of these patients would 'wake up' from their coma within a year. They all did.

By using normally 'invisible' details to the human eye in hundreds of brain images and carefully calculated machine-algorithms, the team has reportedly achieved an 88 per cent diagnosis success rate for coma patients so far.



Breakthroughs in Genetically Modified Rice in Asia

The Philippines-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has secured funding through the Global Crop Diversity Trust to help the conservation and sharing of 136,000 varieties of the staple grain that feeds over 3.5 billion people daily. The Institute's 'gene bank' is an essential factor in developing more sustainable and resilient rice to meet the threat of climate change issues on a global level, with the IRRI working towards making crops more resilient to issues such as rising seas and monsoon flooding. The IRRI collection includes wild rice species, which have been used to develop varieties that resist pests and diseases. Breakthroughs by agricultural scientists have also resulted in the creation of 'scuba rice' that can survive long periods of flooding.



Loving Our Children

A revelation takes a family on a special journey that a proud mother now feels brought everyone closer

**BY SANDRA
BOWLEY**

Sandra Bowley lives on the Central Coast of New South Wales. She works as a legal secretary and her greatest loves are her children, cooking and seeing others enjoy the food she has created for them.

OUR FIRST CHILD, a beautiful healthy baby boy, was born in December 1992. Then, just 13 months later, we were blessed with a baby girl. Our beautiful son idolised his little sister and shared everything with her. Their bond was incredible.

We were like any other family, very close and did a lot together. There were amazing holidays, trips to Bali and Thailand, and in 2000 we even took the kids out of school and travelled around Australia for six months in a caravan.

We all loved going to the beach, fishing and bike riding and since the children were so close in age they did a lot with each other. Our son, being the

eldest, was very loving and protective towards his little sister. They played and read books happily together.

For 12 years our son played soccer with a local club. He loved team sport, surfing and wake boarding with his friends. The stronger personality, he was much more outgoing and social than his sister who was the quiet type.

By Year Eight our son had a dream of joining the military to become an aerospace engineer. After intensive screening and numerous psychiatric evaluations, he was accepted into the Royal Australian Navy. He joined as an officer and upon completing 12 months of gruelling training, our family and closest friends attended his graduation. It was a proud family moment.

The following year, in 2012, our son entered the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in Canberra to begin his studies as an electrical engineer. He would only come home four or five times a year as the pressure of military life and his study timetable was extremely intense. He revealed some aspects of his regimented life and occasionally gave us small glimpses into his demanding daily routine. There was marching in freezing temperatures and 40-degree heat, studying until the early hours, constant inspections of his room,

cupboards, drawers and uniforms and the continual demand to attain perfection. However, he seemed to be thriving and was dedicated to fulfilling his obligations.

However, when he came home unexpectedly for Easter in 2014, he was a very different 20 year old. He hardly spoke to us and was angry with everyone, negative and extremely

distant. My husband, daughter and I tried to talk to him but it was clear something serious was going on. We were worried about his wellbeing.

At about 5am on Easter Monday, we were shocked to receive a call from him saying that he

had just been booked for speeding. This was completely out of character as he'd never been a rule breaker. He lost his licence for six months and was extremely angry at himself for making such a mistake.

We travelled to Canberra to visit him, but it was a real struggle to convince him to see us. Our son, who had been so close to us, now seemed awkward in our company.

Late one night in September 2014, he called his sister. By this stage their relationship was also very strained. They'd hardly spoken in the last two years. But he revealed a secret to her which would blow all our minds: "I want to be a woman".

“

Our son, who had been so close to us, now seemed awkward in our company

Unfortunately, this secret was too much for our daughter to bear alone so she revealed it to my husband and me a day later. At first, we were in total shock and denial and then began the roller coaster ride of emotions. Eventually, our family and friends were told. They were all very loving and supportive but understandably surprised by the announcement.

My husband has a huge heart. He is a quiet man who doesn't say much but when he does it is always truthful and heartfelt. His response was simple: "When I turned 21 no one told me how to live my life. Our children are now adults so if this is what will make her happy, then I'm totally fine with it."

Without his strength, support and these amazing words, I know that it would have been much harder for Sarah. She took a long time to realise that we were genuinely accepting. All we could do was continue to tell her how much we love her and how proud of her we are.

This was not something we saw coming but we would never turn our backs on our children. As parents it was a difficult time but it wasn't about us. It was about our child and her happiness. Silently we grieved the loss of our son and brother, while admiring Sarah's courage and bravery.

When Sarah first revealed the news to her officers she was immediately isolated, and after some bad experiences was eventually forced to leave the military.

She is now recommencing her studies and completing her degree. Under circumstances that most of us could never imagine, Sarah has accomplished many things in a short time.

We will continue to support and love her no matter what because everybody deserves to be happy and feel loved. Sarah has a lot to offer the world and we hope and pray that she finds her way. She is intelligent, kind hearted and an

extremely brave young woman.

As parents we are so proud of both our beautiful daughters and love them unconditionally. Our journey has been long and trying but we have learnt many lessons – never give up and, more importantly, happiness is everything. Much as we try, we can't protect our children from the world and we must learn not to judge anyone until we have lived a day in their shoes.

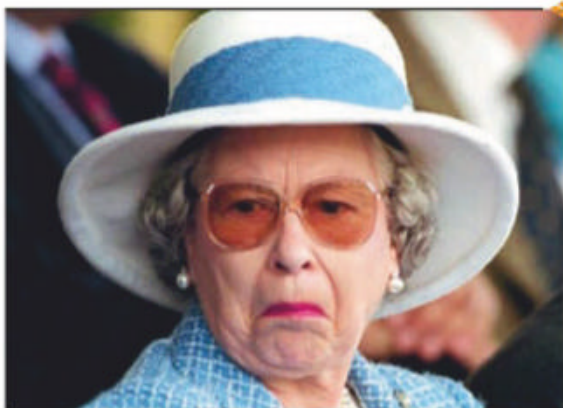
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***All we could
do was continue
to tell her
how much
we love her***

Do you have a tale to tell? We'll pay cash for any original and unpublished story we print. See page 8 for details on how to contribute.

FIND THESE UNIQUE READS AT

Your local RD website



ROYAL WATCH

13 words you will never, ever hear the royal family say

Some terms are considered too improper to be spoken by royalty. Find out why these were banished.

PETS + ANIMALS

28 ways your pet is trying to say “I love you”

They may not be able to speak but that doesn't mean they can't tell you how much they care!



50

HEALTH

HEALTH SECRETS EVERY WOMAN OVER 50 SHOULD KNOW

What you need more of, and what to cut out, when you hit this important milestone.



Join the conversation!



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Smart Animals

The best pets choose the right families to love



Bobsy the Hare

JOAN LAWRENCE

Fifty years ago I had a young family of three boys. My husband Johnny and I left them with a friend while we made a rare trip to the cinema in Liverpool, UK.

It was dark and pouring with rain but with the headlights shining on the road, we saw something ahead of us. Johnny pulled to a stop and I

dove out, ran to the grass verge and grabbed a small, wet, frightened and bedraggled creature. It was freezing cold and so tiny that it fit into the palm of my hand but I still wasn't sure what it was. It yelped once and then snuggled close to me for warmth and comfort. I wrapped it safely in my woollen hat and insisted that my husband turn back and head for home.

We thought it was a baby rabbit because it had long ears, long hind legs and was greyish-brown in colour. Once home, we filled a box with torn-up newspaper and a warm towel. We fed it milk and bread and hoped it would survive. We named our new animal Bobsy as we had no idea of its sex. What we did know was that it was love at first sight.

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 5 for details on how to contribute.

Our boys were entranced with the little animal and it seemed to enjoy all the attention. Sadly though, on the third day with us, it caught its back foot in a door and we quickly realised it was broken. We rushed to the vet, who said, "It's only a rabbit, I'll put it to sleep." Our response was a very determined, "No way!"

We found another vet and were told that she was a leveret, a baby hare. We were told we should continue to keep her in her box for a week and her foot would heal.

After her recovery, Bobsy learnt to use the kitty litter tray. She would comb her long ears with her front paws. Her favourite treats were chocolate drops and she was so smart that she would help herself to them straight from the packet. The local paper heard about this and came to our house to take her photo and write a story about her. We had her for seven wonderful years before we moved to New Zealand and we will never forget her.

Adopted Son

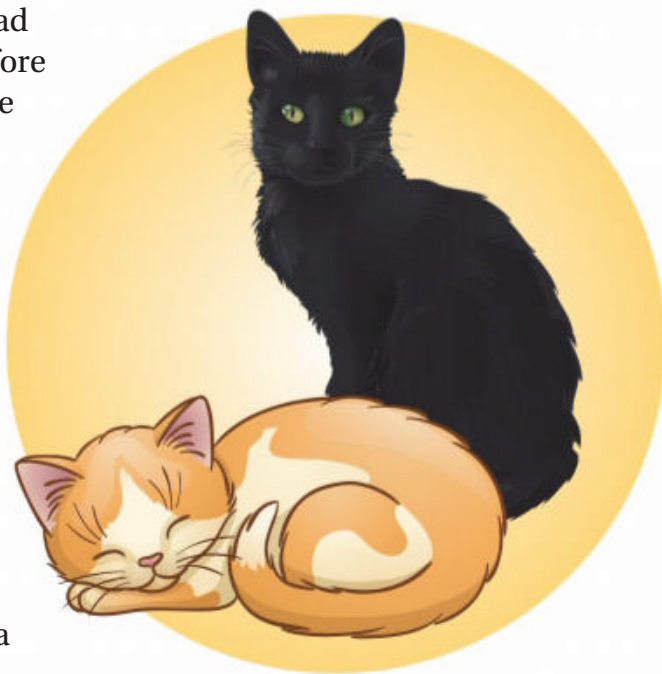
JUDITH FREND A

Twelve years ago, a black cat took shelter under our house. He was starving so we fed him. We were unable to locate his owner so we adopted him and named him Ellery. He settled in and became very affectionate.

We live near bushland in Gynea

Bay, south of Sydney, and one morning we noticed Ellery walking up the path from the bush with a tiny ginger and white kitten following behind. When the kitten saw us, it took fright and dashed back into the bush. The next day Ellery again coaxed the little cat to venture to our place. We'd left food and water out as the tiny waif was starving. It finally plucked up its courage, came onto the deck and ate and drank ravenously. After some days of daily visits for food, the kitten learned to trust us so we took him in too, naming him Sammy.

We realised that Ellery had adopted the little one as his own – just as he had been adopted by us. He regularly grooms Sammy's head and shoulders with a thorough licking even though Sammy today is a bigger animal than his 'Dad'.



Petulant puss? Tetchy tabby? Here's why your kitty may be out-of-sorts

4 Reasons Why Your Cat May Be Cranky

BY DR KATRINA WARREN



Our regular pet columnist, Dr Katrina Warren, is an established and trusted animal expert.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS why some cats are cranky; their temperament can be influenced by their upbringing or they are simply born that way. However, even the sweetest, most affectionate cats can suddenly become bad-tempered and behave out of character. According to veterinarian Dr Katrina Warren, the problem can generally be solved, but you'll need to look for underlying issues.

1 PAIN/MEDICAL REASONS Changes in a cat's behaviour can often be explained by a health problem. Pain can cause cats to behave very differently, and it's easy to mistake a problem as behavioural, when in fact it is medical. Should you observe a significant change in your cat's behaviour, then a visit to the vet is the best place to start. Watch out for changes in eating, drinking or litter-box habits. Also hiding and avoiding being touched. Be sure to report all changes to your vet. There are many cat health problems that can be readily treated to ease symptoms and pain for your cat.

2 LIVING IN A MULTI-CAT HOUSEHOLD It pays to remember that cats don't like to share or queue. Sharing of 'resources' such as litter trays and food



Sudden changes in behaviour in your cat could come down to health problems

bowls can cause stress and anxiety for many cats. It's always a good idea to provide each cat with their own litter box, food, water bowls and bed as a minimum. One litter box for each cat plus a spare is even better, as are multiple sleeping spots and extra scratching posts.

A lack of space to hide from or avoid other cats, competition for territory and lack of individual attention can also add to household friction. If your cat is feeling anxious, offering it an elevated place to sit, such as a climbing tree, can be helpful.

3 CHANGE IN SITUATION

Moving to a new house, the arrival of a new baby, new pets and other types of change can seriously impact cat behaviour. Cats are creatures of habit and tend to be territorial, so a change in routine may cause them to react in a number of ways, including withdrawal or aggression. Try to keep your cat's environment as calm as possible and make sure there are places where they feel safe. Sometimes confining them to a single room with a litter box, bedding and home comforts can help them to settle.

4 PERSONALITY Some cats simply do not like being touched and handled. These are often cats that received limited socialisation with humans when they were kittens. These cats do best in a quiet household without children and need understanding and patience to help build their confidence.



Dos and Dont's

DON'T use your hands as toys. Dangling your fingers in front of a cat may be a convenient way to attract their attention and initiate play, but it sends a message to them it is OK to chase your fingers and bite your hands. Stalking behaviour is normal as that is how cats hunt their prey but you do not want your hand to be their catch!

DO use toys, such as a bauble you can toss or feathers and string attached to a wand. This keeps your hands safe and is a fun way to offer interactive play.



Did You Know?

Scratching is a natural behaviour for cats. It is how they remove the outer sheaths of their claws and it is not something we can stop them doing. Provide them with

a sturdy scratching post that allows them to stretch out. Teach them how to use it by playing games that encourage them to claw at the post until they get the hang of it.



Introducing RD TALKS

Sit back and enjoy the audio versions of the most engaging stories to have appeared in Reader's Digest magazine.

ALONE AGAINST THE FLAMES



Horried, she stared into the burning car. Four people were trapped and she was the only person who could get them out.

THE 39-YEAR-OLD APOLOGY



A bond was broken by a thoughtless act years ago. Could all be forgiven with a simple "I'm sorry"?

THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT DIE



Before them stood a bitumen-encased mummy, his body swollen as if dipped again and again in molten wax.

JAN'S JOURNEY TO PEACE



From the courage of her patients, the young nurse learned how to come to terms with her own diagnosis.

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9

Ways to Make Vitamins and Minerals Work Better

BY DENISE MANN



1 TAKE THEM WITH FOOD

The digestive process helps the body absorb vitamins and minerals. Taking supplements on a full stomach aids absorption and also helps prevent nausea, a common side effect. Of course, there are exceptions – in this case, it's iron. Take it on an empty stomach for better absorption.

2 HOW THEY WORK WITH MEDICATIONS

Vitamins and minerals can interact with prescription and over-the-counter medications, sometimes making one or the other less effective. For example, calcium may interfere with the absorption of levothyroxine, a thyroid medication. On the other hand, supplements sometimes help drugs work better. Studies show that antidepressants are more effective when taken with omega-3-rich fish oil. The worst-case scenario: when supplements excessively amplify a medication's effects. For instance, fish oil, vitamin E and ginkgo are natural blood thinners, so if you take any of them together with an anticoagulant, your blood may become too thin, raising the risk for internal bleeding and haemorrhagic stroke. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for guidance before starting on any supplements.

3 PAIR THEM

There are vitamins and minerals that work well together.

Vitamins D and K2 help calcium absorption, and vitamin C helps the body absorb iron. "In a study we did, taking iron with vitamin C boosted absorption and reduced side effects often seen with iron, such as constipation and nausea," says Dr Chris D'Adamo, assistant professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

4 KEEP THESE APART

Some vitamins and minerals are best taken separately. For example, zinc and copper – in large doses – compete with one another, as do iron and zinc. Calcium inhibits iron absorption, so take iron in the morning before eating, and calcium in the evenings, when it can calm your mood.

5 HELP THEM WORK WELL

The live bacteria and yeasts in probiotics aid digestion and help nutrients to assimilate. Plant-based digestive enzymes help with the absorption of nutrients that may normally get destroyed by stomach acid.

6 HOW TO STORE THEM

The cultures in probiotics need to be stored and shipped cold to stay active. Likewise, omega-3 fish oil tablets should be kept in a cool, dark place so they stay effective. Some experts even suggest freezing them for that reason.



Wait 15 minutes after your morning coffee before taking vitamins

7 GO NATURAL While studies of vitamin E are mixed, it is a powerful antioxidant and should be taken in its natural rather than synthetic form, if possible. This way your body will get more of the good stuff. Look for ‘d-alpha-tocopheryl acetate’ on the label, which indicates that it is natural; ‘dl-alpha-tocopheryl acetate’ indicates synthetic.

8 WATCH THE CAFFEINE Your morning coffee may interfere with the absorption of vitamins and minerals and may also leach calcium from your bones. Minimise these risks by consuming no more than three

cups a day, getting enough calcium plus vitamin D, and waiting about 15 minutes after your coffee to take your vitamins.

9 SCHEDULE THEM B Vitamins tend to give people energy and are best taken at the start of the day. Other supplements can make you drowsy, so are best taken in the evenings. Magnesium, for example, has a calming effect so is best taken at night.

Consider Vitamin Form and Function

Magnesium is one of the most underrated minerals, and many of us don't get enough of it. The problem may be how you take your magnesium supplements, as certain minerals – including magnesium – may be easier to digest and absorb and less likely to

degrade when taken in liquid form.

“If a vitamin is taken as a tablet or capsule, your body has to break it up to dissolve it, but when consumed as a liquid, you can bypass that step,” says nutrition and vitamin expert Dr Douglas MacKay.

That said, most forms of vitamins –

even gummies – are created equally. “The choices are more about preferences, as some people can't swallow these giant pills,” he says. Your best bet is to choose whichever form you are most comfortable with and make sure it contains all of the vitamins and minerals that you need.

NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

Blood Test May Warn of Alzheimer's Sooner

Currently, the only way to catch Alzheimer's early – allowing treatment to slow the progression of symptoms – is through expensive imaging or invasive tests. But researchers have developed a blood test that they hope will spot the amyloid beta that forms brain plaque, a hallmark of the disease. Working with archived blood of Alzheimer's patients, the new test identified those with the disease in almost 70 per cent of the cases.

Prostate Treatment

The prostate grows over time, with noticeable consequences for about a third of older men, who may experience weak urine flow or a frequent need to urinate at night. Until recently, they had to choose between living with the condition, treating it with medication or having surgery. Now there's another option that involves shrinking the prostate with a few

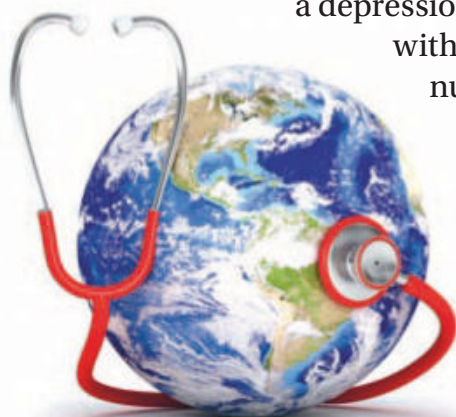
quick blasts of hot steam. It's less invasive than existing procedures and carries a lower risk of side effects.

Far-UVC Light Kills the Flu

A new study has found that continuous low doses of a spectrum of UV light, called far-UVC, can kill airborne viruses without harming human tissue. Though it's not a spectrum found in standard fluorescent or incandescent bulbs, far-UVC light in hospitals, schools and other public spaces could one day provide a powerful check on seasonal flu epidemics.

Vegetarians Need Vitamin B12

Vegetarian participants in a study scored higher than meat eaters on a depression-measuring scale, with researchers surmising nutritional shortfalls could be to blame. Vegetarians are often low in vitamin B12, and animal products are the only natural source of this nutrient.



Are You Still in There?



**She survived the
crash, but will her mind
ever be the same?
Her boyfriend was willing
to take that chance**

BY BILL HANGLEY JR

THE SNOW CAME earlier than they'd expected, but Jeremy Osheim wasn't worried. He'd driven this route a thousand times, and he knew exactly what to do. Take it easy. Watch the road. You'll get there when you get there, and when you do, it's going to be awesome.

It was January 2016, and Jeremy and his girlfriend, Molei Wright,

“

STATISTICALLY, SHE
SHOULD HAVE DIED.
**INSIDE HER NECK,
MOLEI'S VERTEBRAE
HAD BEEN CRUSHED**

were leaving Denver for a weekend of fun with friends on the slopes in Breckenridge, Colorado. They were a like-minded couple: ambitious, gregarious and thoughtful, both lovers of books, plays, music, the outdoors. Jeremy, then 29, was a PR specialist who moonlighted as a mixed martial arts fighter; Molei (pronounced 'Molly'), then 28, was the first in her family to graduate from college and worked selling mutual funds to financial advisers. They'd been together for less than a year, but it had taken only a few dates to realise that they clicked. They'd never formally professed their love for each other, but Jeremy was pretty sure that

Molei was the one. As the car began the twisting climb towards the resort town, Jeremy felt an overwhelming wave of gratitude.

"Life was really great," he says. "Probably the best moment of my life, just feeling so good about what was ahead for us. Then, within a blink of an eye, everything was shattered."

The truck that hit them came out of nowhere. One minute, Jeremy's Mitsubishi Montero was rolling smoothly through the falling snow; the next, he was sitting by the side of the road in a mangled SUV, pinned to his seat by the steering wheel, his body screaming with pain. To his right he saw Molei. Her eyes were open, but Jeremy could tell they saw nothing. He could think of only one thing to say: "Don't die. I love you. Don't die ..."

STATISTICALLY, she should have died. Inside her neck, Molei's vertebrae had basically been crushed. Her head was attached to her shoulders by nothing but skin and muscle. Doctors call it cervical occipital dislocation. The more common description is internal decapitation. The odds of survival: a hundred to one.

Henry Rodriguez, a holidaying Army lieutenant trained in emergency medicine, was driving on the same highway not far behind the Mitsubishi and pulled over instantly when he saw the wreck.

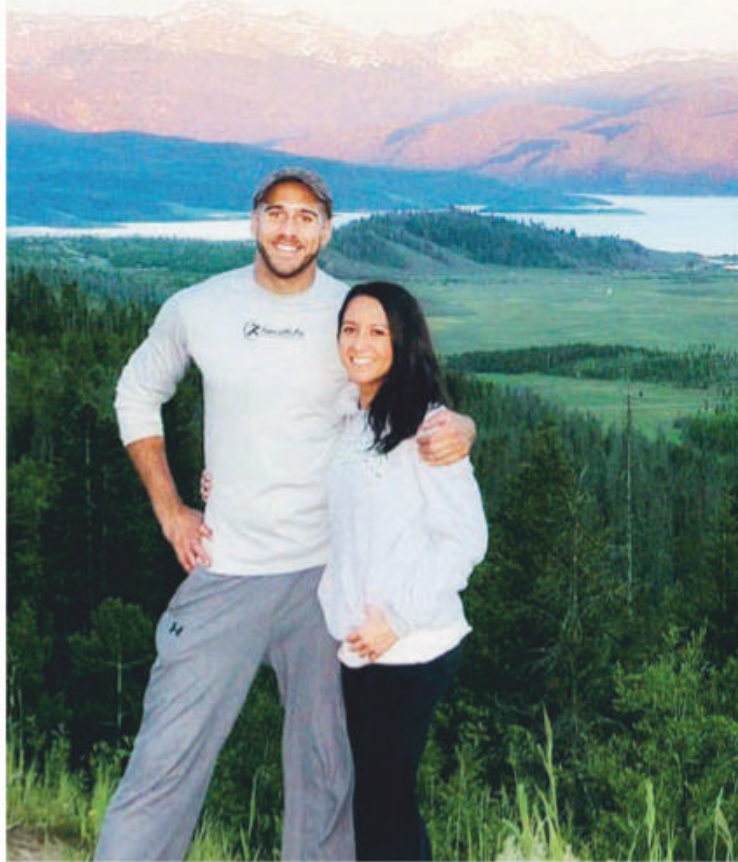
While his wife calmed the trapped

and terrified Jeremy, Rodriguez worked swiftly. One wrong move could have left Molei dead or paralysed. Protecting her head and neck, he carefully extracted her from the twisted wreckage – “scrap metal,” he said at the time – and laid her on the road by the side of the car, covering her with coats to keep her warm.

For 45 harrowing minutes, as snow whirled down from the ink black sky, Rodriguez pounded her chest to bring her heart back to life. As the ambulance rushed to her, she showed flickers of consciousness and movement. Those signs would soon be gone. The fact that she made it to Lakewood’s St Anthony Hospital alive was a miracle.

BY THE TIME her mother, Mo Wright, finally saw her, Molei had sunk into a coma and was hooked up to a half-dozen tubes and machines. The doctors could tell Mo almost nothing beyond the obvious: it was extremely serious. At any moment, fever, infection – anything – could carry her off. And even if her body stabilised, her brain might never recover.

“One doctor took me aside and said, ‘I need to be honest. There’s a chance she’s not going to make this,’” says Mo. “And I remember saying, ‘Molei is a fighter. She’s competitive.



*Jeremy and Molei in the Rocky Mountains,
five months before the accident*

She’s not one to just lie back and take this.’” But doctors knew it might not be up to Molei.

In addition to her shattered neck, Molei had suffered fractures in her ribs and other vertebrae, bruises on her lungs, and damage to the major arteries bringing blood to her brain. Scans showed what Dr Philip Yarnell, a trauma neurologist since 1967, called multifocal shearing injury inside her skull – haemorrhages all across the surface, blood vessels, and brain stem.

Like anyone who has suffered a traumatic brain injury, she’d entered a realm of mystery. How well a given

mind recovers is completely unpredictable. In fact, doctors have a saying: If you've seen one brain injury, you've seen one brain injury. Sometimes victims come back fully capable and healthy. Sometimes they linger forever in the twilight of consciousness.

And sometimes their brains survive but their personalities don't.



THE SIGNS WERE TINY,
BUT THEY WERE
ENOUGH. **SOMEBODY
WAS IN THERE.
BUT WAS IT MOLEI?**

"They get angry, they have temper problems, their families are afraid to be around them," says Dr Yarnell. Such cases can be devastating, shattering relationships and ending marriages. "You're with one person, and then you're with another, and it's not the one you started with."

Dr Yarnell knew the Wright family would want answers. But he knew that only time would tell the full story.

"You don't give a long-term prognosis," he says. "You can be fooled."

So as Molei lay silent and still, the best the doctors could do to save her brain was to save her body. Drugs to fend off fevers and infections. Machines for food and oxygen.

Surgeries for injuries. Constant monitoring for signs of consciousness. And above all, patience.

"We don't have a medicine to make the brain heal," Dr Yarnell says. "We try to let the brain heal by itself."

IN THE WEEKS after the crash, a pattern set in. Molei lay in her bed being fed through a tube, breathing on a ventilator. Dr Yarnell and his team would come in every day to test her reactions and see whether her brain was responding. Poke her arms and feet. Pinch her shoulders. Move objects in front of her face to see whether her eyes would track them.

But as the doctor's log documented, Molei showed little reaction:

February 6:

Not following commands.

February 11:

Not following commands.

February 15:

Not following commands.

"It was killing us," Mo says. "Every morning I would get in the car and drive to the hospital, and every morning was my lowest moment ... What are they going to tell us?"

Jeremy, who by now had recovered from his own serious injuries – a broken hip and scapula, as well as heart and lung contusions – followed the nurses' cues and talked to Molei as if she could hear him, clinging to the slender hope Dr Yarnell had given them: that she could recover.

"I just kept thinking, *She's going to*

come back to me. I know it, I know it," he says.

But with every passing day, Jeremy also knew that Molei's chances of recovery grew worse. At one point, her wrists and hands started to curl inward, a phenomenon called posturing that can indicate serious irreversible regression.

"I was heartbroken," says Jeremy.

And then, about three weeks after the crash, Molei began to show signs of life:

February 25:

Moving the right leg spontaneously.

February 29:

A focused gaze.

March 1:

Off the ventilator all day.

Looks to both sides.

The signs were tiny – sometimes so tiny that only Dr Yarnell could see them.

But they were enough. Somebody was in there. But was it Molei?

MOLEI CAN still remember seeing the date on the whiteboard at the foot of her bed and realising that three full months of her life had disappeared.

"It said, 'Hello, Molei! Today is Wednesday, May 18,'" she says. "It was confusing ... like, Wait! What happened to February and March and April?"

Molei didn't know it, but she was now in Craig Hospital, a leading rehabilitation centre for brain and

spinal injuries. Three months after the crash, Dr Yarnell had seen enough consistent response to get Molei admitted to Craig. There, therapists worked to revive her with regimes of wake-up drugs and physical therapy.

Molei was largely in a fog the first several weeks after coming to. She knew she was still Molei, but she also knew she couldn't connect with staff or even loved ones, and she didn't know whether she ever would.

And then one day, Jeremy made her laugh. It happened in the workout room at Craig. Jeremy had taken her there himself.

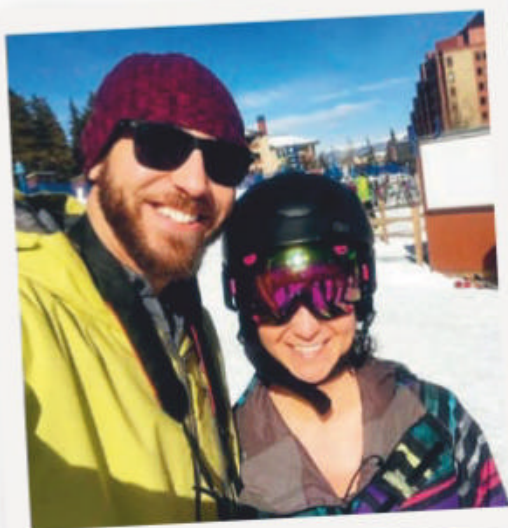
By this point, Molei was in a sort of half-conscious limbo. She couldn't direct her own movements or talk. But if Jeremy or her therapists moved her limbs, she could sit up and even stand. That day, Jeremy was doing just what he'd been doing for weeks: helping and hoping.

First he hoisted her from the bed and onto a kind of hanging chair that moved on tracks, which in turn took her to a wheelchair. From there, it was down to a room full of therapy. His plan was to stretch her limbs a bit while he talked to her. So he laid her on the therapy bed, sat at her feet, and started flexing her legs, chattering and spouting, as he called it, "nonsense", just as he'd been doing for months.

He wasn't surprised when Molei's body suddenly spasmed and she sat up abruptly. Without even thinking,



Top: Molei and Jeremy in May 2018 at Red Rocks Park in Colorado.
Bottom: “It was liberating,” Molei said of skiing again after the accident. “I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, this is happening!’”



Jeremy responded, “Hey, we’re not doing sit-ups. What are you doing?”

And she laughed.

Jeremy’s eyes lit up. “Oh my God!” he shouted. “You hear me! You’re in there!”

It was a watershed moment. “I don’t know if I’ve ever laughed so much or smiled so hard,” he says. “I knew then that she knew who I was. She thought my stupid jokes were funny still. She knew who I was.”

It was a breakthrough for Molei as well. “The way he laughed back, I just knew,” she says. “He could tell, ‘Hey, she’s still in there!’ I’m not just this girl in a coma.”

In the weeks that followed, Molei improved dramatically. Soon she was watching, listening, focusing and responding. She still couldn’t talk, so she tried to communicate using the sign language she’d learned in college. Jeremy knew some sign language, too, so he understood the first thing she told him.

“It was, ‘I love you,’” Molei said. “That’s the first thing I said to him.”

MOLEI HAD SPENT A TOTAL of six months in hospitals after the crash, including two months at Craig where she learned to eat (carefully), talk (slowly), and walk short distances with a walker. Cognitive rehabilitation therapy – puzzles, tests, medication for focus and attention – had helped her mind come back to life. The brain is a remarkable thing, Dr

Yarnell often says. If you keep exercising it, it can find all sorts of ways to work around its problems.

So when the doctors said she was ready, she moved back to her family's home. There were setbacks and frustrations; the simplest decision, such as whether to use the walker or the wheelchair to get to the living room, could be fraught with stress or



IF YOU KEEP
EXERCISING THE BRAIN,
IT CAN FIND **ALL**
SORTS OF WAYS TO
WORK AROUND ITS
PROBLEMS

danger. But every month, Molei made progress. As her body revived, her mind sharpened, just as Dr Yarnell had predicted.

In what may have been her biggest step of all, Molei moved in with Jeremy 18 months after the crash. The life they'd once imagined sharing began to take shape. And even if it isn't exactly the life they'd expected, Jeremy says, the love they share is just as deep – maybe deeper.

"I liken it to going to war with someone," says Jeremy. "We went through something that is unfathomable to other people. I shared some things with her that I can't quite explain."

Today, Molei still faces her share of challenges. Her left side is still weak, her grip uncertain; her fused spine means she can't turn her neck. Dr Yarnell says Molei will probably always have some cognitive deficits. Multitasking will tire her out. Holding down a high-stress job might never be possible.

And yet she now manages the couple's household along with her own recovery. She meets with friends, shares books and podcasts with Jeremy, and volunteers to visit classrooms and talk to students. She's training for a bike race. She's considering a career as an occupational therapist.

She's the Molei Jeremy fell in love with, the one who'd never settle for anything less than the best. "You just can't turn off this wild ambition," he says. "You can't go through something like this and be exactly the same person, but the core of who she is is the exact same."

Two years after she and Jeremy almost died in the snow driving to Breckenridge, Molei finally arrived at the resort town. Using outriggers (poles with skis on them), she skied down the mountain, ploughing through the snow as the trees blurred by.

She wasn't a crash victim anymore. She was just Molei Wright, out in the sun with the man she loved, conquering the mountain she'd first set out to run two years earlier. **R**



14 Travel Mishaps YOU'LL NEVER FORGET

Embarrassing incidents,
hilarious misadventures,
shipwrecks, bkie gangs ...
our readers share their more
memorable travel experiences

COMPILED BY GREG BARTON



On the flip side

On a family holiday to the Gold Coast we went to a water park for the day. I thought the Lazy River Ride looked just my style but, being rather large, I was a bit worried about getting in and out of the rubber ring tube you float around on. With my family egging me on, I tried as gracefully as I could to climb into it.

I sat down, did a huge back flip while the rubber tube made a very loud, embarrassing noise – which sounded as if it came from me. When I surfaced I found not only my family laughing hysterically, but also a big queue of people waiting to go on the tubes.

Determined not to be beaten by that damn tube I soldiered on – and thoroughly enjoyed myself.

FAYE CRUICKSHANK,

BALLAJURA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Earth-shattering trip

The first time I travelled overseas was in 2006. I went to Hawaii – only to land in Honolulu after a 6.7 earthquake had hit. Quite an interesting start to a holiday, I must say.

DEBORAH BARTON,

BELMONT, NEW SOUTH WALES

Not-so-smooth sailing

My husband and I were on a holiday in Fiji. We knew we didn't want to fly

back home – we wanted to sail. Luckily, we found an experienced captain willing to take on two novice sailors.

Our radio wasn't working on the way out but we never guessed that would be a problem.

About seven days into the 14-day trip we hit a storm (which could have been avoided had the radio been working).

After another two days sailing on a 45-degree angle over huge waves, all three of us were suddenly flung through the air and water started gushing into the boat.

Shocked, we picked ourselves up and I ran for the lifeboats. The captain's head was bleeding hard and he seemed dazed. Fortunately, the boat wasn't sinking but there was a moment when we thought we were going to die. Then we realised the water that was rushing in was coming through a porthole in the roof.

The *roof?! We had capsized!* When we popped up the right way again, we found that the mast was broken, the diesel had all spilt, and everything was soaking wet.

We called for help on the long-range walkie talkies and had a response, when suddenly – just like in the movies – the walkie talkies stopped working. They'd been water damaged.

We floated on the water in the storm with no mast and no way to steer for 26 hours before being rescued by an Indonesian fishing ship.

CAITLIN LESTER, OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND

Elephant encounter

When I was four, I was sprayed with water from an elephant while visiting Sydney's Taronga Zoo. Elephants like potato chips and so do greedy little four-year-old girls from the high country of New Zealand.

I am now 59 years old and can still remember feeling like a drowned rat. My little sister, in her stroller, was also wet. I can still hear Mum and Dad and other visitors laughing. We had to go to the zookeeper's house to dry our clothes.

CATHERINE HOULIHAN,
OAMARU, NORTH OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND



Lost in transit

I was the lucky winner of an all-inclusive trip for two on the *Mississippi Queen* paddle steamer in the US.

The first night of our trip was spent in Los Angeles, where we'd fly on to New Orleans. As our departure time came closer, I thought I'd better go to the toilet. But in my haste to get back to the gate, I became completely disoriented and somehow managed to go back the wrong way.

Eventually, after what seemed an eternity, I saw my harassed husband and an attendant in the distance. We were the last two very embarrassed people to board the plane.

What a relief they waited for me and what a wonderful experience we nearly missed.

In hindsight, I realised that the entrance to the toilets was a semicircle and I had gone out the opposite side to the one I entered.

PAMELA INNES,
PEACHESTER, QUEENSLAND

Holidaying in style

To celebrate our second wedding anniversary, my hubby and I decided to splash out on a night at the Hilton Hotel in Taupo. All went well, although we didn't blend in as much as the other guests. We had a beaten-up Toyota Corolla and my husband's idea of dressing up was his favourite soccer shirt and ripped shorts.

We had a great time visiting the tourist hot spots and relaxing, until

Freed by a bikie gang

It was Christmas Eve, 1995, and I was travelling down the Princess Highway out of Melbourne, Victoria, in my new car, heading for the family holiday resort. As I was approaching Geelong, a big kangaroo hopped from out of nowhere and hit my car, which rolled into a ditch. Stunned, and hanging upside-down in my car seat, I looked outside and noticed the feet of a group of people trying to get me out. I was finally released by members of the Hells Angels, one of whom just happened to be a doctor.

He checked me out. I was OK. They put me on the back of one of the member's motorbikes and took me to my final destination. That was the best Christmas ever.

SLADE YUILLE, POINT COOK, VICTORIA



tragedy struck our dear old 'crud-rola'; a guy towing a boat with his 4WD ute smashed our driver's door and shattered the window. The door wouldn't close, so we had to tie it shut with rope.

Sheepishly, pulling back into the Hilton, we parked next to two new Bugatti sports cars worth more than our first home.

Then, to make matters worse, on check-out the concierge offered to bring the car around.

"No, absolutely not!" I replied, as my husband handed over the keys, laughing.

Next thing I knew, our big-exhaust, broken runabout with no driver-side window pulled up with the stereo

blasting and the hotel guy laughing uncontrollably. I was mortified!

JESSICA MCKENZIE,

WHANGANUI, NEW ZEALAND

All I want for Christmas...

My husband and I were travelling to Perth, Western Australia, for a week-long holiday. Just two days before heading off, I developed a bad toothache so went to the dentist to get it treated, but the toothache returned during our flight to Perth.

On arrival, we checked in to our holiday rental in Fremantle.

The house had a beach painting of three girls staring eerily

out at you and the house made certain noises that made us feel uncomfortable. In fact, it spooked us to the extent that we booked other accommodation in the CBD, catching an Uber down late at night.

The next day was Christmas Day, and low and behold my toothache got worse. I spent Christmas Day searching high and low for a dental clinic that was open.

ELENA WOO, SINGAPORE

Escalating panic

I was on my way to South Africa via Singapore and Switzerland to visit family. Leaving Singapore, I dressed in warm clothing for the cold transit through Zurich, donning a long skirt and warm jacket.

As I had quite a few hours wait at the airport, I decided to catch the train into the city. Just as I headed down the escalator, the bottom of my skirt got caught.

I froze. There was no-one around. Then some men saw my problem and rushed over.

By this time my skirt was around my knees.

Talk about embarrassing!

One guy yanked my skirt out. I was so relieved, but I had to walk around Zurich with a ripped skirt.

I no longer wear long skirts anywhere near escalators.

LORRAINE MALONE,

HEATHRIDGE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The key to a memorable holiday

We went camping with some friends at Ocean Shores in the far north of New South Wales. On the way home we stopped at a lagoon for a swim. Everyone was having a great time. Until it was time to leave.

The car keys were nowhere to be found.

We called roadside assistance, but because the car was new they couldn't break in.

We ended up sleeping in our friend's car – all four adults and three children. Thank goodness it was a wagon.

The next day we found the missing keys under a lantern. It made for a very interesting end of a good holiday, that's for sure.

BRIANNA FARRALL,

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

Lost on the 13th floor

It was the second day of our holiday, staying at a hotel by the scenic Tanjung Bungah seaside in Penang, Malaysia.

Our daughters, Ani and Amy, then seven and four, were looking forward to breakfast before jumping into the pool. My husband headed to breakfast first to book a table while I promised to follow with the kids soon after.

The three of us walked down the hallway of the hotel's 20th floor

towards the lift. Little Amy, ever the bundle of energy, trotted happily a few steps ahead and pressed the lift button. As we approached the lift, we saw a young girl crying at the closed lift doors, and I realised her family might have accidentally gone down in the lift without her. Just as I knelt down to ask the young girl about her family, the lift doors opened and Amy entered before I could stop her.

My frantic attempt to press the button repeatedly to hold the lift was of no use. I just watched helplessly as the doors closed with my four year old inside.

Panic surged through me, as I imagined her running out of the lift onto *any* floor searching for us.

I held my eldest daughter's hand and the lost girl's hand, got into the lift and went straight to the lobby. Thankfully, as the doors opened, the girl spotted her family outside and ran to hug them. I immediately looked for my husband.

My eldest, Ani, had remained calm, but when she saw her dad and heard me say, "Amy is lost," she broke down in tears, sobbing uncontrollably as she kept calling her sister's name.

We quickly reported the incident to hotel staff, and with swift action and a few calls on the walkie-talkie, we were told Amy had been spotted on the 13th floor.

We couldn't stop thanking the hotel staff as my husband rushed to the 13th floor to find her, safe and

sound. A bubbly maintenance worker recounted how Amy remained calm when he spotted her coming out of the lift. She answered a few questions about herself, and sat quietly on a chair near the lift while waiting to be brought back to her Mum and Dad.

Despite that, her tears flowed when she leaped into my arms in relief, sobbing just like her sister!

Now that they are teenagers, whenever we mention the story, both girls just roll their eyes and the eldest tries her best to deny she cried for her now annoying sister.

SHAMSUN NISHA,

SUBANG JAYA, MALAYSIA

That's the pits!

In the early '90s, we were travelling by car back to Sydney from Melbourne when we stopped at a roadside picnic ground for a bite to eat.

Our five-year-old daughter went off to go to the toilet by herself, as did I, where I discovered the toilets were those old-fashioned pit toilets.

The problem was the seat was designed for an adult – and a five-year-old's rear end is somewhat smaller.

I got my wife to run to the toilet for fear of our daughter falling down the toilet into the pit below. As luck would have it, my wife managed to grab our daughter's arm just before she fell to the point of no return.

PHILLIP CUNNINGHAM,

MOUNT DRUITT, NEW SOUTH WALES

Locked and loaded

A few years back, my family and I went on a trip to Lake Toba, North Sumatra. Before leaving, I had convinced my sister to pack her belongings into my luggage so we wouldn't need to pull along too many bags.

Upon arriving at the airport, I realised I'd left the key for my luggage lock at home. I knew my dad would make a big fuss, so I quietly told my siblings. We reached the hotel, by then close to midnight, and secretly asked our guide if the hotel could get someone to try to open the lock for us. Fifteen minutes later, a guy came... carrying a *saw*.

We started laughing as the poor guy tried to saw through the lock, while my parents – who heard and came over to our room – laughed, too. From then on, my siblings would never again share luggage with me!

PAMELA JUNE, PETALING, JAYA MALAYSIA



Missing cases curse

We lost and recovered our luggage four times on a trip to South America.

First, our luggage was left on the tarmac in Dallas when we flew to Santiago, on route to Buenos Aires.

After we received the cases in Buenos Aires two days later, we boarded our ship to sail around South America. My bag didn't turn up outside our cabin. I burst into tears and our wonderful steward searched every deck until he found it.

Other passengers weren't so lucky,

and didn't have their bags for the entire trip.

When we disembarked in Fort Lauderdale, we were offloaded at the airport but our bags were sent on to Los Angeles. When we reached Los Angeles and retrieved our luggage the following day, we flew home to Sydney. Surprise, surprise! My husband's bag had been left in Los Angeles.

A good reason to always carry spare clothes (and a swimming costume) in your hand luggage.

LYN CAMPBELL,

MALABAR, NEW SOUTH WALES

Giving LIFTS

Retired truck driver
Margaret Foster
Hyde pairs long-haul
truckies with dogs in
need of a ride

BY KATHERINE LAIDLAW

WHEN CHRISTA PARE'S FATHER, Jim, died in November 2017, finding a home for Tundra became a priority. The five-year-old dog, a husky lab mix with boundless enthusiasm and a thick coat of white fur speckled with auburn, had been Jim's constant companion. Pare had arranged for two of Jim's good friends to adopt the dog, but there was a snag: the couple lived 1300 kilometres and a 13-hour drive away. It would cost more than \$800 to fly Tundra to his

new home across Canada, and Pare was already working overtime to pay for funeral costs. "Tundra's future was weighing heavily on my shoulders," she says now.

A relative who had heard of Pare's dilemma directed her to the Facebook page 'Furry Hobos N' Hiway Heroes', hoping the group might help. The four-year-old organisation is the brainchild of Margaret Foster Hyde, a retired truck driver who dreamed up the plan of pairing dogs with long-distance truck drivers when she realised how expensive it would be to transport her newly adopted English springer spaniel, Barkley, who lived over a thousand kilometres away. Back then, Foster Hyde called up a friend who worked the route and asked if Barkley could hitch a ride. "The idea just blossomed and caught

Pickles, a 12-year-old German pinscher, was one of the first dogs to be transported by Furry Hobos N' Hiway Heroes. Founder Margaret Foster Hyde adopted him following a breakup between his owners



on,” says the 66 year old.

When Pare heard back from Foster Hyde, she was so relieved that she cried. “Beyond the cost, to have to crate Tundra and put him on a plane by himself after he lost his best friend would have been awful,” she says. “He loves being in a vehicle – this was a perfect solution.”

AT HER HOME, Foster Hyde has three whiteboards set up in the living room. One tracks the drivers’ routes, one is for the dogs who need rides and one is for the dogs already in transit. Since her group’s inception, Foster Hyde estimates they’ve transported between 300 and 400 dogs across Canada and the United States. “We used to move litters of puppies, but we try to avoid that now because it can get hard in the trucks,” she says. “Too much poo.”

Requests come in from private owners, veterinarians, rescue organisations and shelters. Once Foster Hyde has identified her charge and where the dog needs to go, she sketches out a route with as few handovers as possible. Then she’ll get on the phone with the drivers.

It’s not unusual for a group of truck drivers to hold a conference call in the middle of the night and spend

hours joking around once they’ve made logistical arrangements. “It feels like a family,” says Foster Hyde.

At first, she enlisted drivers she knew, but after a while, new recruits came her way via word of mouth. She currently partners with more than 20 truckies, a number of whom have ended up adopting their shelter-bound cargo themselves.

The Hiway Heroes never charge a shipping fee, asking only for snacks and coffee in return. (They have received everything from homemade cookies and cheese platters to loaves of bread.)

The supplies drivers need – leashes, blankets, dog food – are paid for by Foster Hyde or donated. Over the years, the group has escorted a stolen pit bull back to its owner and ferried a pair of St

Bernards across Canada. The longest distance a pup has travelled is the 2315 kilometres from Los Angeles to Alberta in western Canada.

As for Tundra’s comparatively short-haul trip, it was made possible by a driver named Greg Rumbolt, who dropped the husky lab off at a truck stop.

The instant Rumbolt opened the cab’s door, Tundra leaped out onto the snow to meet his new owners. He was home. **R**

“

**The Hiway
Heroes never
charge a
shipping fee,
asking only for
snacks and
coffee in return**

”

Quotable Quotes



“
WHEN THE POWER
OF LOVE
OVERCOMES THE
LOVE OF POWER,
THE WORLD WILL
KNOW PEACE.”

JIMI HENDRIX, musician

*I get bored with
people who
complain about
this or that.
It's such a
waste of time.*

BETTY WHITE, actor

I think half or almost all of the pain in the world ... is people not feeling seen. It's like Mr Rogers, my hero, says: “Love is at the root of everything ... love or the lack of it”.

CONSTANCE WU, actor



**Doing anything less than something
amazing is squandering this whole
reason that you're here.**

BRANDON STANTON, photographer

**THERE'S
NO LOVE
WITHOUT
LOSS. IT'S A
PACKAGE
DEAL.**

BRAD PITT, actor



*My grandmother always
used to say, “Summer
friends will melt away
like summer snows,
but winter friends are
friends forever”.*

GEORGE R. R. MARTIN,
author of *A Dance with Dragons*

Life's Like That

SEEING THE FUNNY SIDE

APRIL
1954



From the Archives

A little peace and quiet is always a desirable event for parents – as revealed by this 65-year-old story.

“Some of us concocted a holiday plan last year that was so satisfactory we’re repeating it this year,” a friend told my wife. “Four couples banded together and rented a house in the country for two months. Each couple spent a two-week holiday there, taking care of all 13 children.”

“Good heavens,” exclaimed my wife. “I wouldn’t call taking care of 13 children a ‘holiday’ – though it would be wonderful, of course, for the children.”

“Oh, the two weeks were hell. The ‘holiday’ was the six weeks at home without the kids.”

G.H. HENNEGAR

SWEET AND SOUR

Before heading off to Mexico on holiday, my daughter asked her doctor for medicine to ward off any potential stomach troubles. Instead, the doctor prescribed bottled water and electrolytes, “which have simple sugars and salt”.

My daughter liked that. “Oh,” she said, “like a margarita?”

SUBMITTED BY KAARYN ROBERTS

GROWTH POTENTIAL

THREE-YEAR-OLD SON: I don’t know what I want to be when I grow up.

ME: You can be anything you want.

SON: (After a few seconds) I think I’ll be a mother. SUBMITTED BY MARY LAHL

MUSICAL JOURNEY

SCENE: A public bus.

BUS DRIVER: “Everyone remember

to keep your headphones plugged in. From the looks of all of you, I can already tell I hate your music taste.”

instagram.com

UNDER THE WEATHER

During a class about the effects of weather, my high school science teacher asked, “Does anyone know the first sense you lose when struck by lightning?”

A classmate put her hand up and answered, “Your sense of humour?”

Seen on reddit.com

MAN OR MACHINE?

I bought a new car today from a dealership who had me check off – using a pen and a paper form – that I was not a robot.

@MARCIOBIN



ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES; CARTOON: PHIL WITTE



The Great Tweet off: Man Flu Edition



The wives of Twitter are tenderly mopping the brows of those poor men suffering from ‘man flu’.

My husband is home sick from work today and it’s like having one thousand babies. @SARAHDELRIO

ME: My husband has a cold. Do you have those euthanasia pills?

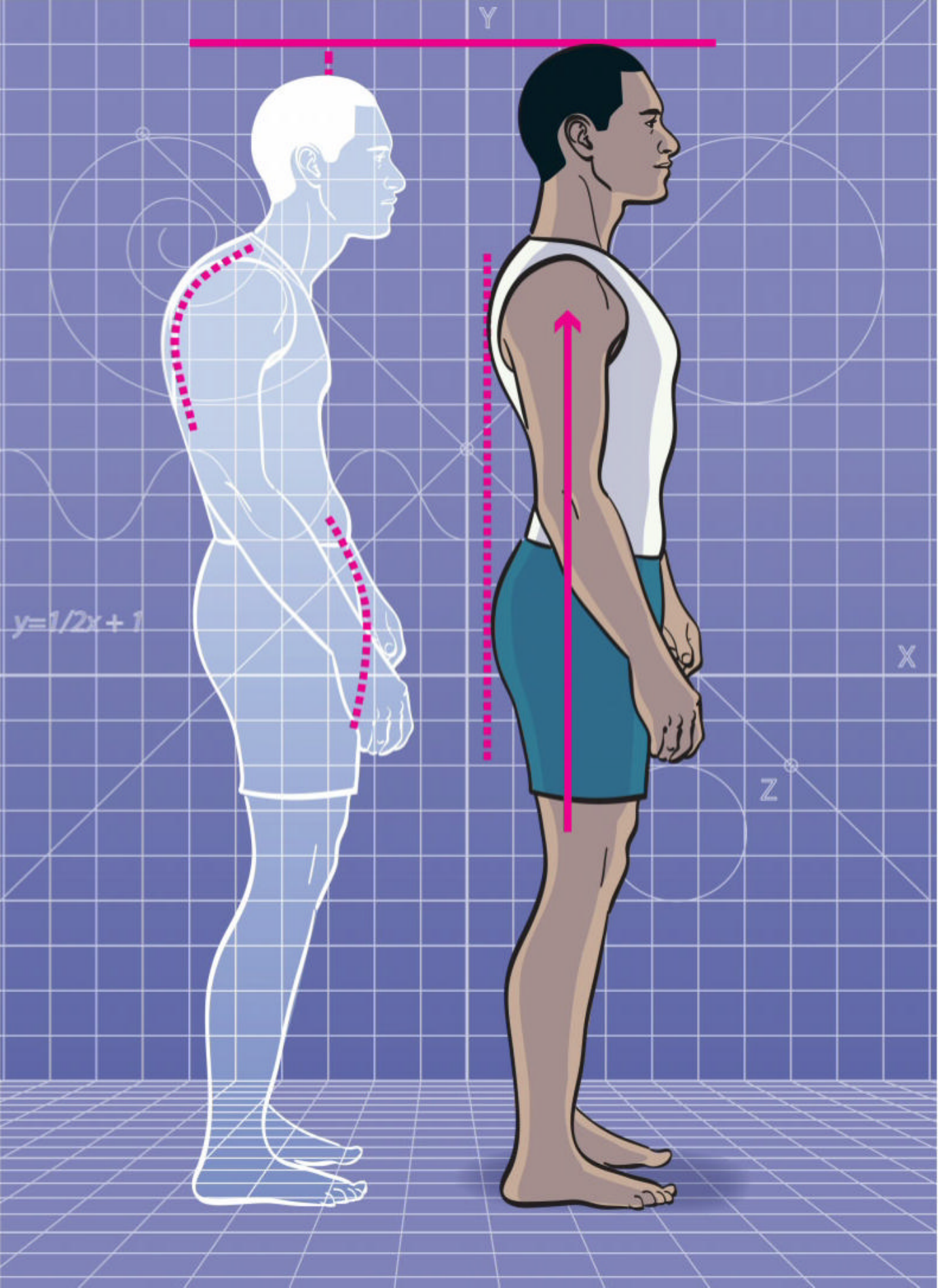
PHARMACIST: I think you mean echinacea pills. Ha ha.

ME: No. @MUMSIEESQ

My husband is home sick with the flu today, so I have to run to the shop for some ice cream to make myself feel better. @DONNA_MCCOY

I’ll be on my deathbed and my husband will still say, “Oh man. I’ve got the worst cold ever. The. Worst.” @YENNIWHITE

My husband has a cold so we’re using Google maps to plot the quickest routes to local emergency rooms. Pray for us. @ERICAWHOTOYOU



IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE
WITH THESE 5 TIPS
FROM FITNESS EXPERT
AMANDA VOGEL



You're
No
Slouch

ILLUSTRATIONS BY REMIE GEOFFROI

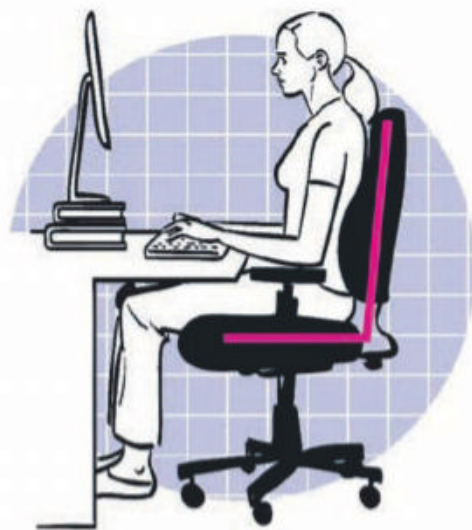


The better your posture is, the stronger and more comfortable you'll feel standing in line at the supermarket, lifting heavy boxes or sitting at your desk. Attaining great posture goes beyond staving off a slouch (although that's part of it). It's about achieving the correct body alignment for minimising strain and tightness and moving more efficiently.

The payoff to proper posture? Less pain in your neck, shoulders and back – vulnerable spots that can bear the brunt of poor alignment. Good posture also helps strengthen weak muscles, which will reduce the possibility of harm from overuse or strenuous activity. Less obvious benefits include better breathing (an upright torso allows your diaphragm to open fully) and a boost in confidence (holding yourself a little taller can promote self-assurance).

Where to Start

Since poor posture leads to extraneous wear and tear on your joints and soft tissue, the first step to banishing bad posture is sizing up which of your daily habits are problematic. Awareness of your positions helps you correct them. To that end, follow this guide for perfecting postures linked to everyday activities.

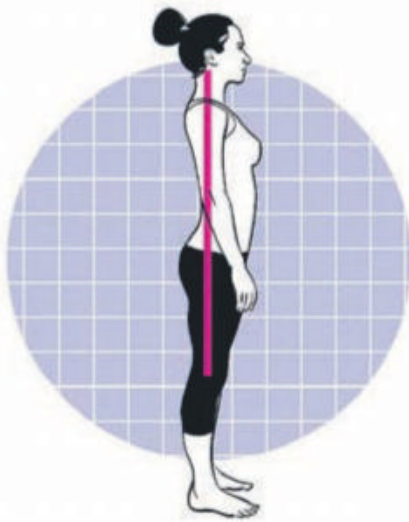


SITTING

Prolonged sitting, especially when you slouch or crane forwards, can strain muscles and ligaments in your back and put pressure on your spine. Choose a chair that allows you to get close to your desk while sitting upright with shoulders aligned over hips. Properly positioning the chair and desk might mean removing the chair's armrests.

Next, your arms should be bent to 90 degrees and your shoulders relaxed when your hands are on the keyboard. The chair's lumbar support should fit comfortably against your lower back, just above your waistband. Adjust the chair height so you can place your feet on the floor or a footrest with legs bent to 90 degrees. Finally, protect your neck by ensuring the top of your computer monitor is around eye level. You might have to prop it up with a stack of books or a desk accessory.

Even with good sitting posture, it's still smart to limit chair time. Physiotherapists recommend getting up every half-hour. Walk around for at least a couple of minutes to stay active and promote the flow of blood and fluids to the spine. If standing up that frequently isn't an option, work a quick walk-around into your schedule whenever you can – during a break between clients or while talking on the phone.



STANDING

Poor posture while standing, especially in high heels, can put stress on everything from your feet to your spine. The key to good standing posture – apart from wearing flats with support – has a lot to do with positioning the pelvis and spine to lessen that stress.

To achieve this, stand with feet hip-width apart and adjust your pelvis into a neutral position, where your tailbone is neither tilted up nor

tucked under. In a neutral stance, your hip bones face directly forwards, with your tailbone pointing to the floor.

Zeroing in on the spine, there should be a slight inward curve in your lower back, a slight outward curve in your upper back and another inward curve at the neck. As for the shoulders, roll them back and down as you depress your shoulder blades towards your hips. Pull your chin back so your ears line up over your shoulders. If you were to view your standing posture from the side, you'd want to see your ankles, knees, hips and shoulders all in line.



LIFTING

Ideally, you should lift items with your core engaged, knees bent and head upright. Avoid bending forwards. Start with good standing posture (see above left), feet shoulder-width apart or slightly staggered. Activate your core muscles by gently drawing your abs inwards.

Next, bring yourself close to the object you want to lift or adjust its position. Squat down, bending at the hips and knees and pushing your butt out behind you as if sitting into a chair. As you lift, slowly straighten your legs, keeping the object close to your body. Position your shoulders back, head up and spine straight.



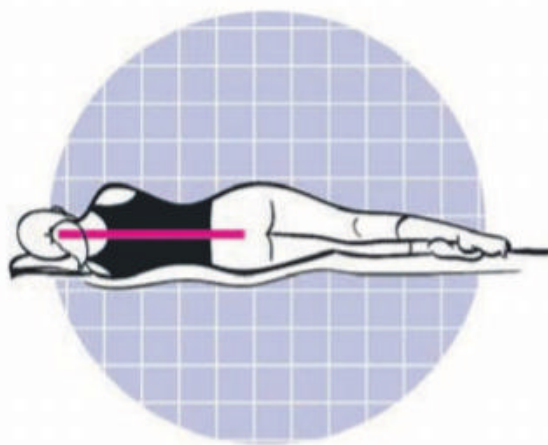
DRIVING

Set the seat so you can press the accelerator without constantly bending and straightening your leg – ankle movements will do. You should be able to place your feet flat on the floor just under the brake pedal without stretching for it. Sit upright with your back supported, shoulders aligned over your hips and arms slightly bent. Your hands should be either side of the wheel and the back of your head aligned with the middle of the headrest.

You should be able to see the ground four metres in front of your

vehicle, so raise the seat or prop yourself up if needed, for safety and to avoid neck strain.

Road tripping? As with any type of prolonged sitting, take 'stand breaks' every two hours, if possible, to stretch your legs and walk around.



SLEEPING

As the average person spends about a third of their life sleeping, bed posture is as important as standing or sitting posture. Unsurprisingly, your pillow has a lot to do with healthy sleeping posture. You need to maintain your spine's natural curvature while lying on your back or side with your head, not shoulders, resting on the pillow.

Stacking pillows or using a flat one isn't advised. The neck has a normal inward curve and when it's bent out of alignment all night, waking up with a kink is a very real possibility. Select a pillow that's the correct thickness to support your head without your neck bending sideways. **R**

That's Outrageous!

BAD SPORTS

MARATHON RUNNERS

in China were rewarded with a gift bag after the race. One of the goodies was a fruit-flavoured bar ensconced in its pretty English-language wrapper. In fact, the Royal Orchard bars were fruit-perfumed soap. According to the BBC, "Witnesses report many bars of soap, all with one bite missing, dumped on the roadside."

Source: bbc.com

GREAT NEWS for a player on the Gateway Grizzlies, a professional baseball team in the US: with his team losing 3-0, he cracked a grand slam (four home runs) to take the lead! Bad news for the player: the ball sailed into the parking lot and smashed his car's windscreen.

Source: stltoday.com

THE NOMINEES for the craziest injuries ever: **1.** Olympic swimmer Ryan Lochte, who tore a ligament in his knee while catching a teenage fan who'd jumped into his arms. **2.** Baseball player Brent Mayne,

who missed several games with back spasms – triggered by trying to

look both ways before crossing a street. **3.** Hockey goalie Glenn Healy, who required ten stitches after he cut himself while putting together his bagpipes. **4.** NASCAR driver Jimmie Johnson, who broke a wrist during a celebrity golf tournament after falling off the *top* of a golf cart.

Source: bleacherreport.com

AN UMPIRE at the ATP Challenger Tour in Nottingham, England, penalised tennis player Brydan Klein for calling a player on the court a "stupid, stupid person." The player Klein was berating was ... himself. And he was right! The penalties cost him the game, set, and match.

Source: msn.com

FROM FAN TO FANATIC: a New England Patriots fan tattooed *Tom Brady* on his lip so that the champion American Football quarterback's name would always be on the tip of his tongue.

Sources: bostonmagazine.com

Rob Brydon

IS A VERY FUNNY MAN

For Welsh actor Rob Brydon being home to put his kids to bed is more important than fame

BY KATHY BUCHANAN

Comedian Rob Brydon isn't used to being a leading man. He is a stand-up comedian, a gifted impressionist, a TV star on shows such as *Gavin & Stacey* and *The Trip*, is the host of the popular BBC TV panel show *Would I Lie to You?* and a very busy 53-year-old dad with five kids.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



*Rob Brydon plays
accountant Eric in
the feel-good comedy,
Swimming with Men*



**Swimming with Men *has been described as*
The Full Monty in Speedos**

Rob Brydon is laughing about how ironic it is that his first appearance as a leading man was in fitted swimwear and a swimming cap in a story about a men's synchronised swimming team in the British comedy *Swimming With Men*. With a height of 1.7 metres and a fit-yet-compact frame, this good-natured Welshman is usually more likely to be doing an impression of a sportsman than playing one in a film.

"Being in a pool was very challenging," he says of the intensive swimming boot camp.

"We did two weeks training at the Olympic Diving Pool in Stratford, four hours a day, learning the routines. Then filming in the pool all day. It was exhausting and cold. We needed hot water bottles."

The film was inspired by the 2010 documentary *Men Who Swim* by Dylan Williams and shows the men

competing at the unofficial Male Sync-Swimming World Championships in Milan.

Brydon stars as Eric, a bored accountant verging on a midlife crisis, who has reached a stalemate with wife Heather (Jane Horrocks, *Ab Fab*). Swimming lengths at his local pool, Eric stumbles across a motley crew of middle-aged men who've come adrift.

They meet regularly to practise their amateur synchronised swimming and support each other – navigating vulnerabilities, dreams and disappointments.

He's welcomed by new friends such as widowed Ted (Jim Carter, *Downton Abbey*) and divorced Luke (Rupert Graves, *Death at a Funeral*). Meanwhile, the chlorine-scented group benefit from Eric's clever number crunching, which helps the synchronised swimming team achieve new heights. There's a traditionally British feel-good factor echoing *The Full Monty* (in Speedos), with the men manoeuvring through unknown territory such as aging, body image and finding a new life purpose.

BRYDON grew up in Baglan, Port Talbot, Wales, with a school teacher mother and father who worked at a car dealership. "Actor Michael Sheen is from where I grew up and

his parents go to the same church as mine. A few famous people are from this small area such as Richard Burton and Sir Anthony Hopkins. Catherine Zeta-Jones is from Swansea [20 kilometres away]. I met her once at an event which I'm sure she won't remember," he laughs.

At school, Brydon was famous for his excellent Kermit the Frog impressions. "I knew I was funny from when I was young. I was one of those kids doing silly voices, impersonating teachers or famous people. I'd study and watch and want to understand how it worked," he says.

"I was always encouraged by teachers, friends and my parents. I suspect they realised at an early age I was never going to be a lawyer or a doctor," he deadpans.

Brydon studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. His professional career began at Radio Wales, doing voice overs and working on a home shopping channel. His big break was in 2000 on the BBC one-man video diary mockumentary *Marion and Geoff*, where he played a taxi driver relaying the story of his failed marriage.

Since then, he's been a fan favourite in the docu-comedy *Human Remains* (2000), the comedy *Cruise of the Gods* (2002) – filmed

with good friend David Walliams (*Little Britain*) – and the BBC TV series *Gavin & Stacey* (2008-2010) as loveable Uncle Bryn. In 2013, he was awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire.

He also stars in *The Trip* trilogy with Steve Coogan (*Stan & Ollie*) – both film and TV versions. Directed by Michael Winterbottom, the comedians play fictionalised versions of themselves, who've been paid by a newspaper to review restaurants, with a witty side of banter and bickering. The comics have already trekked through England, Italy and Spain. The fourth, no doubt also hilarious instalment of *The Trip*, will have them eating and drinking their way through picturesque Greece.

"Coogan and I were resistant to doing *The Trip* at first and worried about it being self-indulgent. We'd

The series Human Remains was written by Rob Brydon and Julia Davies, who also starred in it





Rob Brydon and Steve Coogan are planning to eat their way through Greece in The Trip

never sit there doing impressions to each other, for example. That would be ludicrous,” he laughs. “It seems obvious to me that it’s not real but I can’t blame people for thinking it is.”

With a varied career, he’s also appeared on the London’s West End with Kenneth Branagh in the play *The Painkillers* in 2016 and is the host of the popular BBC TV panel show *Would I Lie to You?*

Film credits include *Cinderella*, *Early Man*, *The Huntsman: Winter’s War*, and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. He most recently appeared as Inspector Lestrade in the Hollywood slapstick comedy *Holmes & Watson* with Will Ferrell. “I love him! I was a huge fan and Will turned out to be one of the nicest people and one of those rare comedians who likes being funny and making you laugh even when you’re not shooting.”

Brydon’s party trick is his ‘small man trapped in a box’ voice. And he’s so famous for his Michael Caine impressions with Steve Coogan, they were a comic bit at a 2014 children’s charity fundraising event at the Royal Albert Hall in London, which celebrated Caine’s work – and where the British icon finally got to stick it to them.

Mick Jagger is also a fan. “I was at a swanky party thinking, *I’m talking to*

Mick Jagger. Amazing!” There’s something special about him – he exudes a life force. Later, when we were leaving I heard a voice from above saying, ‘Rob, Rob don’t throw those bloody spears at me.’”

I realised he was doing an impression of me doing an impression of Michael Caine in *Zulu*. “I said, ‘I’ve told you before, Jagger, ‘If you’re not going to sing... get back inside.’”

Brydon was inspired by classic comedians such as The Two Ronnies, Mel Brooks, Jackie Mason, Peter Sellers and Barry Humphries. A highlight was meeting Humphries, the Australian comic behind Dame Edna Everage, and receiving a handwritten letter from him after citing him as an influence in an interview. It’s led to a lovely friendship and Brydon taking his dad to the races with Humphries, making a dream of his father’s come true.

Family is at the heart of everything for Brydon who lives with his second wife Clare, a TV producer, and their two children George, seven, and Tom, ten, in the affluent suburb of Twickenham, London. With three older children from his first marriage, Katie, 24, Harry, 22, and Amy, 19, he says he's happiest at family occasions when everyone is together.

After his stand-up tour of Australia and New Zealand in March and April, his family is meeting for a holiday in New Zealand.

"I love Australia and the sarcasm. There's an outspokenness and a no-nonsense attitude that's different. I filmed in Australia doing a series called *Supernova* in 2014/15 and stayed in Sydney for nine weeks. I went sky diving and I'm not a sky diving person. There was so much outdoor stuff going on. It was like a better version of Britain."

When it comes to performing, Brydon admits that it is requiring more physical and mental energy now he's in his 50s. He jokes, "I like my sleep but we have a seven year old who likes to get up early. I like a sense of routine and normality. When you're touring or filming you are out of the whole life routine. This year I have big chunks of being away so I cherish the time when I am home.

"Of course, there are times you don't want to be noticed but I like being 95 per cent famous. I love how things have worked out.

"The truth is your family don't watch your work religiously. My family think I'm funny, but when you're living your normal day-to-day life, they aren't skipping around saying, 'Father, you've filled my life with glee,'" he chuckles.

"If I want to make them laugh I can. But I'd be lying if I said they are constantly in gales of laughter!" **R**



RECORD BREAKERS

An octogenarian flying trapeze artist and a rescue dog named Feather with a talent for jumping hurdles (191.7cm) are among the record-breaking stars to win a place in the 2019 edition of *Guinness World Records*. Others to feature in the book include the creator of the world's largest knitting needles (4.42 metres) and an Irish butcher, Barry John Crowe, who has produced the most sausages – 78 – in one minute. Betty Goedhart, from California, has been named the world's oldest trapeze artist at 85 and attributes her success to "doing things I enjoy". She began trapeze classes at the age of 78. REUTERS



Scent OF A Woman

How finding the perfect perfume turned out to be an act of self-affirmation

BY KATHERINE LAIDLAW

FROM *THE GLOBE AND MAIL*

ILLUSTRATION BY ALANNA CAVANAGH

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I sat on my parents' paisley bedspread and stared at the kaleidoscopic bottles of perfume arranged on my mother's dresser. They cast rainbows around the room in the right light, and I was mesmerised. Less appealing were

the scents themselves, combinations of chemicals my young nose was too untrained to understand. But I knew even then that they were symbols of glamour, subtle ways to send signals in the night.

As I got older, I began to experiment.

I saved up my pocket money and, like so many kids of the 1990s, spent it on travel-sized silver bottles of Gap Dream and Gap Heaven. As a teenager, my parents gave me Ralph by Ralph Lauren, because for some reason I wanted to smell like a tangerine putridly close to expiring. To no one's surprise, the attention I most often caught was that of wasps at summertime barbecues. Later, I'd wear Chloé by Chloé, hoping in an awkward phase that it would flirt for me, and because my boyfriend at the time liked it. And then there was Philosophy's Falling in Love, because I wanted so badly to be sweet to everyone I knew.

None of them lasted. And I realised, eventually, that every perfume I'd ever worn was an attempt to be something for somebody else. So I put them away.

IT IS NOT COMMON knowledge that when you go into the hospital to have pre-cancerous cells removed, you come out smelling like rotten fish. The procedure leaves you with a scent that hangs on for more than a week. It makes sense; you go into an examination room to have a little part of you burned away, and you come out smelling a little like a burn. It's a lingering, acrid reminder in the days afterwards, the days

during which you're not supposed to worry too much.

As anyone who has ever waited for test results knows, however, the unknown is an excruciating place to be stuck. For a month, I wandered around, paid more attention, noticed better, wondered if I had cancer. As the weather turned warmer, the sky seemed the bluest of blue. I sat on a

park bench beside a man rabidly scratching at a pile of lotto tickets, and I wished for a little bit of that kind of faith. Walking through the rain one afternoon, I watched droplets fall into puddles, unfurling into endless ripples. *That's how cancer grows*, I thought. But it's how time passes, too, if you're lucky, the

cycles of life growing wider and wider until they fade away.

Like so many moments that seem utterly trivial until they become pivotally significant, I stopped at a shop in April to buy a bottle of shampoo as mine was running low. After walking purposefully to the back of the store and grabbing a white tube of the usual stuff, I browsed a little, which I almost never do. A bottle nearby stood out to me, a glass vial that looked like something out of an apothecary shop. It read 'Replica' in plain, blocky black type across the label. I'd never heard of the line, from

“
*My new
perfume
helped me to
forget and to
remember,
to feel a little
less afraid*

the fashion house Maison Martin Margiela. The accompanying copy promised that the scent, Beach Walk, would evoke a stroll on the beach with its notes of salt air, coconut milk and bergamot, which seemed to me like a lot to accomplish in just one whiff. Still, I picked it up and sprayed some on my wrists.

I spent the rest of the afternoon with my wrists affixed to my face, like a scratch-and-sniff sticker, except the sticker was me. It was the least perfumy perfume I'd ever worn, and I knew right away I should have it and wear it and be my best scratch-and-sniff self every day.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, perfume was about transformation. But in the weeks after my procedure, I learned to value a scent's ability to transport. As I swiped it across my collarbones each morning, my new perfume helped me both to forget and to remember, to feel a little less afraid. Gone was the burn, healing slowly,

and in its place were the unbridled smiles brought by memories of my best-loved days. Like when my dad would toss my sisters and me into the ocean's waves as my mother and brother watched from shore; the feeling of awe as I stood, a speck of a human, facing a Pacific sunrise at daybreak; the afterglow of a near-perfect afternoon spent holding hands for the first time with someone new.

It seems natural, now, that such a scent would find me eventually, after 32 years of wandering, and that it would be a musky smell like a romp in the sand dunes, like unwashed, sun-baked summer skin, my favourite kind.

A month or so after that serendipitous moment in the shop, I ran into an ex. We got to talking about perfume. "I can't smell it," he said, as I held my wrist up to his nose. But I could. I smiled. After all, it wasn't for him, and in my mind I was already in the sand hundreds of kilometres away. **R**

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MUSEUM OF SELFIES

The word 'selfie' has exploded into mainstream culture over the past decade as people around the world take self-portraits using their smartphone's front-facing camera. And now the selfie has its own museum in Hollywood, with special attention given to the much-loathed food selfie and bathroom mirror selfie. The 'high-up selfie' exhibit features a fake skyscraper that visitors can climb to snap a rooftop selfie. WWW.TELEGRAPH.CO.UK



8 Genius Packing Tips from Flight Attendants

Want to travel lighter and smarter? Master the art of packing with these tips from the professionals

BY KIM FREDERICKS

TAKING THE TIME TO PLAN what to pack before you fly can save you time, money and hassle. “How many times do you pack a lot of stuff, but never wear half of it?” asks flight attendant Michele Radon. “Lay it out before you pack it. You may find that you’ll be able to wear a pair of pants with two different tops.”

It’s also OK to wear the same thing twice, adds flight attendant Abigail Valencia. When it comes to handbags and dress shoes, choose just one and wear your bulkiest items such as coats, suit jackets and boots, when you travel. Mix and match your go-to travel outfits. A favourite top, blazer and tailored pants can be mixed

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

and matched for both casual and unexpected dressier occasions.

The following useful tips will help make your next trip a breeze.

PACK 'DOUBLE DUTY' CLOTHES

If you want to travel light, simplify your travel wardrobe to include items that can serve more than one purpose. A comfortable jumper or pashmina wrap, for example, is essential, says Radon. Airlines don't always give out blankets, so you can use it as a blanket or a 'pillow' when on the plane and then wear it. Pack one pair of jeans and one pair of black pants that can be dressed up or down, suggests Valencia. A couple of T-shirts is all you need for casual wear, and one dressy shirt will suffice when going out at night, she says. If you need dressier attire, add a black dress, scarf and heels, while a smart blazer should work for men.

STREAMLINE YOUR TOILETRIES BAG

When travelling light, streamline your getting-ready routine, explains flight attendant Jane Frilicci. If you're not dedicated to a certain brand, just use the shampoo, conditioner, body wash and body lotion the hotel supplies and use the hotel's hairdryer. Be careful of taking bulky glass aftershave and perfume which can break or is not allowed in hand luggage on international trips. Consider using up sample size

atomisers or refillable sprays, roll or cream perfume instead.

Take the opportunity to use up those sample size products you've been storing or fill your favourite product in travel size storage. If you're going to a remote place or a resort area, prices may be high and you may not be able to buy whatever you need, so taking enough to last the trip makes sense. Frilicci recommends getting a clear travel bag so you can see all of your toiletries when going through security and on your trip.

COMPRESS AND PROTECT

Bulky items such as puffy coats for colder destinations that take up a lot of room in your suitcase can be managed by using compression cubes. If you have to travel with bulky items, compression space bags can easily compress your clothes, says Valencia. They save room in your suitcase and protect your items from dirt, moisture, odours and allergens.

KEEP KIDS OCCUPIED AND OTHER PASSENGERS HAPPY

Parents need to be prepared when travelling with kids, says Frilicci. "People get bent out of shape when there is a screaming kid, especially when they're trying to sleep." To keep kids and passengers happy, Frilicci suggests packing a new toy, not an old one. Some parents make gift bags for the passengers seated next

to them including packaged sweets, earplugs and a note that says something like “Hi, I’m Jake, I’m three months old, and I’m not the best traveller so you might hear my loud voice.”

KEEP USEFUL ITEMS IN YOUR CARRY-ON BAG

“Keep a separate carry-on bag with all of your essentials that you need to access during the flight – things such as a toothbrush, make-up, passport and a pen,” Frilicci says.

BE PREPARED FOR DELAYS

Weather, mechanical problems and air traffic are just some of the reasons flights get delayed. To prepare for the possibility of delays, Radon suggests packing snacks that keep well, such as nuts, muesli bars or cheese sticks. For international flights with liquid restrictions, she suggests bringing along an empty water bottle and filling it at a water fountain once you’re through security.

Other items to consider include headache tablets, allergy medicine, anything for blocked ears including gum to chew, and lotion, because being on a plane makes your skin dry, explains Radon. Another item she won’t leave home without? Disinfectant wipes. “After a few hours, the bathrooms can become unkempt.”



Streamlining the packing process makes travelling more comfortable

PRIORITISE WHAT SHOES TO

PACK Shoes take up so much room in your suitcase and should never touch your clothes, says Frilicci.

“There really is no easy answer when it comes to packing them.” To maximise space, she tucks jewellery and other small items into the shoes and then puts them in shoe bags. Another tip is to pack rubber flip flops to ensure you don’t walk barefoot on the hotel or plane floor.

BE SMART WITH YOUR

ELECTRONICS Travelling with too many devices can seriously weigh you down. Determining whether you can or cannot live without your mobile phone, laptop, headphones and iPad is a personal decision, but at least streamline the cords and chargers. Frilicci recommends keeping all of your cords and a portable charger wrapped neatly in a small container or zippered pouch.





How to Help Your Indoor Garden Thrive

Take a little care and reap huge benefits

BY BRENDA SCHMERL

PLANTS BRING LIFE AND COLOUR

into the home and don't require much in the way of maintenance. Follow these simple tips and your plants should flourish.

POSITION PLANTS CAREFULLY

Look for the best place in the house for each plant, and don't be afraid to try different locations until you find the best spot.

RE-CREATE A FOREST FLOOR

If a room seems too dark to sustain a healthy plant, don't be fooled. Most indoor plants originate in tropical and subtropical regions, in particular equatorial forests, and they thrive in dim environments and filtered light. The ideal spot is in front of a large window facing east or west, filtered if necessary through a mesh net curtain.

SUN-LOVERS FACE NORTH

If you have a plant that thrives on lots of sun, place it on a windowsill facing north or north-east. Check soil moisture levels regularly and inspect the leaves to check they are not being burned. At the slightest sign of withering, move the plant towards the middle of the room.

PLANTS FOR THE BATHROOM

Ferns and other moisture-loving plants do best in vaporous rooms such as bathrooms where they can lap up regular doses of mist.

WATER FROM THE BOTTOM Water poured directly onto the soil may flood, or not reach the pot plant's roots. Instead, water plants bottom up by standing them in a dish and filling the dish with water. Delicate plants such as fuchsias thrive on this method. For this approach to work, all pots should have holes in the bottom so the water can be absorbed.

KEEP AWAY FROM DRAFTS If you don't want your plant to die of heat or cold, avoid placing it in draughty areas or near ducted heat or air-conditioning outlets.



DO NOT OVER WATER

Water your plants only when the potting mix feels dry to the touch – over watering is often the cause of indoor plant death. Check by pushing your finger

into the soil; if it comes out without any trace of soil on it, start watering. Remember that plants may need more frequent watering in summer.

REMEMBER, PLANTS LIKE TO BE MISTED

Most indoor plants benefit from an occasional misting of water. Make sure the water is at room temperature and use an atomiser or spray bottle. Misting is particularly beneficial if you live in a centrally heated or air-conditioned house as the air can become very dry.

APPLY SOME FERTILISER Feed your plants with small amounts of fertiliser. The easiest solution is complete liquid fertiliser in the recommended dose, usually every two to four weeks – check the label.

USE ICE CUBES An efficient way to water your plants directly at a steady rate is to use ice cubes. Put a couple on top of the pot soil and leave them to melt.

House Plants Purify the Air

RESEARCH CARRIED OUT by the University of Technology Sydney into the health and environmental benefits of indoor plants returned some interesting results that demonstrate why house plants should be on everyone's must-have list.

The study showed that potted plants effectively clean the air inside the home, removing harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels.

It wasn't just the plants themselves that helped to clean the air, the study found. The micro-organisms living inside the potting mix, which exist symbiotically with the plants, also play an essential role.

In a separate survey, people studied in a plant-filled office environment had reductions of up to 60 per cent in stress, anxiety and fatigue, while about 80 per cent of people felt that plants made a space feel more welcoming.

BENEFICIAL PLANTS

PEACE LILY reduces many toxins, including ammonia, benzene, acetone and ethyl.

ALOE VERA and **MOTHER-IN-LAW'S TONGUE** can be placed in your bedroom as they emit oxygen, aiding you in getting a good night's sleep.

DEVIL'S IVY helps to remove ozone, which is found in car exhaust fumes.



PEACE LILY

ALOE VERA

MOTHER-IN-LAW'S TONGUE

DEVIL'S IVY

Old-Time Doctor Remedies *That Work*

BY JEN MCCAFFERY AND TINA DONVITO

HONEY TO HEAL a wound. Cod-liver oil – *blech!* – to keep your eyes healthy. Your grandmother and her doctors probably swore by these fixes, and now science is catching up with them. Researchers have produced hundreds of studies in the past five years about the effectiveness of home remedies. But not all the old-time solutions really help. That's why this list focuses on treatments with evidence to support those claims.

Remember that even natural cures can interact with medications. If you take pills regularly or have a chronic health condition, check with your doctor before trying these.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY YASU+JUNKO





A

Age Spots

TRY:

Buttermilk

You can skip the expensive skin creams. This rich by-product of butter contains lactic acid and ascorbic acid. One study showed that this combination lightened age spots more effectively than lactic acid alone. Apply to the spots with a cotton ball, then rinse with water after 20 minutes.



B

Back Pain

TRY:

Comfrey

This medicinal plant has been used for centuries to treat joint and muscle pain. A study of 215 patients found that applying concentrated comfrey cream to the lower and upper back reduced

muscle pain. You can buy it in health food stores and online.

C

Constipation

TRY:

Ground Flaxseed

“It’s almost as if nature tailor-made ground flaxseed to relieve constipation,” says gastroenterologist

Dr Will Bulsiewicz.

“It is a great source of both insoluble and soluble fibre, which add bulk to the stool and promote the growth of good bacteria.” Ground flaxseed is an excellent source of plant-based omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to help soften stools. Aim for two to three tablespoons a day as part of a fibre-rich diet.

D

Diarrhoea

TRY:

Blackberry Tea

Blackberries are rich in tannins, substances that can tighten mucous membranes in the intestinal tract. They have long been used as a treatment for diarrhoea. Make blackberry tea by boiling one or two tablespoons of fresh or frozen blackberries or dried blackberry leaves in one and a half cups of water for ten minutes, then strain. Drink several cups a day. You can also buy blackberry tea, but make sure that it contains blackberry leaves and not just flavouring.



E

Eyestrain

TRY:

Cucumber

Lie on your back and place one cucumber slice (about a third of a centimetre thick) over each closed eye. Cucumbers contain antioxidants that studies have shown help decrease swelling and relieve pain. Replace the slices with a cooler pair every two or three minutes, for up to 15 minutes in total.

F

Foot Odour

TRY:

Lavender Oil

Lavender essential oil not only smells good but also has antibacterial properties that help kill germs. Before bed, rub a few drops of oil onto your feet and massage it in. Wear socks to protect your sheets.

G

GERD and Heartburn

TRY:

Globe Artichoke Extract

Compounds in artichoke leaves called caffeoylquinic acids stimulate the release of bile from

the gall bladder, which helps relieve nausea, gas, bloating, and other symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and heartburn, according to clinical studies. Since the leaves are mostly inedible, look for artichoke extract capsules in health food stores or online.

H

High Cholesterol

TRY:

Niacin

Studies show that taking niacin (vitamin B3) can lower LDL (or 'bad') cholesterol by 10 per cent and triglycerides by 25 per cent, and raise HDL

I

Indigestion

TRY:

Fennel

Those tiny seeds that you often see in bowls at Indian restaurants are fennel. They contain carminative agents, which help expel gas from the intestinal tract. Chew a pinch of fennel to help prevent after-dinner belching.



(‘good’) cholesterol by 20 to 30 per cent. Since high doses can cause gastrointestinal problems, liver damage and glucose intolerance, ask your doctor before taking any supplements.

J

Joint Pain

TRY:

Green Tea

A potent antioxidant found in green tea called epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG) may ease the joint pain and inflammation of rheumatoid arthritis, according to a study in *Arthritis and Rheumatology*. Researchers suggest drinking two or three cups a day.

K

Kidney Stones

TRY:

Lemon Juice

The most common type of kidney stone occurs when oxalate

– a compound found in foods such as spinach, bran and french fries – builds up in urine and ‘sticks’ to calcium, forming crystals. Drinking at least half a cup (120 millilitres) of lemon juice per day could help, researchers say, as citric acid can prevent the crystallization of calcium and oxalate that creates these stones.

L

Lip Cracking

TRY:

Olive Oil

When you’ve got chapped lips, coat them with olive oil, a natural lubricant that will help soften and moisturise lips nicely.

M

Memory Lapses

TRY:

Sage

A study in healthy older adults found that taking sage leaf extract

capsules improved word recall and memory.

Menopausal Symptoms

TRY:

Hypnotism

A study published in *Menopause* found that women who had five sessions of hypnosis per week experienced 74 per cent fewer hot flashes at the end of a 12-week study than did a control group. Even better, the women in the hypnosis group reported that the hot flashes they did have were less severe than before.

O

Osteoporosis

TRY:

Soy

A review of several studies conducted at the University of North Carolina, Asheville, found that people who ate foods rich in soy had healthier bones and a reduced risk of fractures. Scientists

N

Nausea

TRY:

Ginger

Ginger can help alleviate nausea caused by chemotherapy, morning sickness or motion sickness. “Although we do not yet understand the exact method that allows ginger to be effective at reducing nausea, it is thought it may work by obstructing the serotonin receptors in the gut that cause it,” says dietitian Erin Palinski-Wade. It also may prompt the body to release enzymes that help break down food. Sip some ginger ale or tea, or chew some candied ginger root.



are still trying to figure out which active compounds may account for the protective effect, but good sources of soy protein include soybeans, soy milk, miso, tempeh and tofu.

P

Psoriasis

TRY:

Capsaicin

Capsaicin is what gives cayenne its heat. Research has shown that applying capsaicin cream helps lessen the itching of psoriasis.

R

Razor Burn

TRY:

Avocado

Avocado is rich in vitamins and oils that soften and hydrate skin to relieve the tenderness of razor burn. Apply mashed fruit or avocado oil directly to the irritated skin.

S

Sinusitis

TRY:

Eucalyptus Oil

Give your congested sinuses a steam treatment. Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil to a pot of water, boil and remove the pot from the stove. Drape a towel over your head, then lean forwards so it forms a tent over the pot. Keep your face about 50 centimetres above the water as you breathe deeply. As the vapour rises, it carries droplets of oil into your sinuses and loosens congestion. Studies show that the main ingredient in eucalyptus oil, cineole, can help people recover faster from acute sinusitis.

Sore Throat

TRY:

Horehound Tea

Horehound, a plant in the mint family, can reduce the swelling of inflamed throat

tissue. It also thins mucus, helping you clear it from your throat. To make the tea, steep two teaspoons of the chopped fresh herb in one cup boiling water for ten minutes; strain and drink.

T

Tooth Pain

TRY:

Clove Oil

"Oil of cloves can sometimes soothe an inflamed tooth," says dentist Saul Pressner. Clove oil has bacteria-slaying properties and also a numbing effect. Mix a few drops with olive oil to avoid irritation, then swish it in your mouth.

U

Urinary Tract Infection

TRY:

Cranberry Juice

A study of 373 women with a history of urinary tract infections

(UTIs) showed that those who drank a glass of cranberry juice daily had a 40 per cent reduction in the number of UTIs compared with those who drank a placebo. While other studies have been mixed about the effect of cranberry juice on UTIs, scientists think a compound in cranberry juice can prevent bacteria from sticking to the walls of the urinary tract.

V

Varicose Veins

TRY:

Horse Chestnut

Some studies suggest horse chestnut seed extract may help improve blood vessel elasticity and strengthen the valves inside veins, thanks to an active ingredient called aescin. Take a 250-milligram pill of horse chestnut seed extract twice a day for three months to treat varicose veins.

W

Wounds

TRY:

Honey

Since ancient Egyptian times, people have used honey as a salve for wounds. Pure honey contains the enzyme glucose oxidase, which causes a chemical reaction that releases hydrogen peroxide, an antiseptic. Honeys range widely in their antibacterial potency, however. For best results, scientists recommend medical-grade manuka honey, from New Zealand, which contains an extra compound that increases its effectiveness. Apply honey directly to a wound every 12 to 24 hours and cover it with sterile gauze.



W

Warts

TRY:

Duct Tape

Although doctors aren't sure why it works, one study found that putting duct tape on warts and replacing it every six days was 25 per cent more effective than

freezing them with liquid nitrogen – and much cheaper.

Y

Yeast Infection

TRY:

Sea Salt

Sprinkle a cup of sea salt in a bath of warm water to relieve itching and pain.

Z

Zits

TRY:

Tea Tree Oil

In one study, a five per cent tea tree oil gel was as effective as a five per cent benzoyl peroxide lotion in limiting acne outbreaks – with fewer side effects. **R**

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Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



Peas in a Pod

A man's bragging about his promotion to vice president of the company got so out of hand even his wife was annoyed. "Look, being a vice president isn't that

special," she said. "They even have a vice president of peas at the supermarket!"

Not believing her for one second, the man called the supermarket and

demanded, "Get me the vice president of peas!"

The assistant replied, "Fresh, canned or frozen?"

SUBMITTED BY
NORMAN MIDDLETON



SSSSCARY

It's a good thing that snakes and dogs don't interbreed. Nobody wants a loyal snake.

ROY BLOUNT,
FROM GARDEN & GUN

BARELY RAISING AN EYEBROW

According to a new report, adverse side effects occurred in over 3000

women who used Botox last year – none of whom seemed surprised.

SUBMITTED BY
CRYSTAL LOWERY MCKINNEY

WHO CALLED IT ...

- A mug shot instead of a selfie?
- The sun instead of a space heater?
- A veterinarian instead of a dogtor?

reddit.com



*"You're lucky, Dave.
You have talent."*

AIRING ONE'S OPINION

Some people love gloomy skies and some people hate them.

I just think there's a lot of grey area.

COMEDIAN THILO SAVAGE

ATTACKING SHOT

A wife arrives home late at night from a business trip and quietly opens the door to her bedroom. But she notices four legs instead of two peeking out from under the duvet.

Seized by a fit of rage, she reaches into the cupboard for the cricket bat and hits the bed a few times.

Still in shock, she lurches to the kitchen to have a drink. As she enters, she sees her husband there, reading a magazine.

"Oh welcome home, love," he says. "Your parents came for a visit, so I let them have our bedroom. I hope you said hello."

SUBMITTED BY GRAHAME JONES

THE WRONG WAY

A senior citizen was driving down the freeway when his wife called his mobile phone.

"Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the A3. Please be careful!"

"It's not just one car," said Herman, "It's hundreds of them!"

Seen on the internet



Happy Meal

Q:

What did one cannibal say to the other while they were eating a clown?

A:

"Does this taste funny to you?"

jokes.cc.com

SAVED BY *Miracles*

They wanted to be the first
ones to see the underwater caves.
Then they ran out of oxygen

BY LIA GRAINGER

*Xisco (left) and partner
Guillem knew the
dangers of exploring the
maze of caves*

PHOTO: MATIAS ALEXANDRO



Mid-morning on Saturday, April 15, last year, Xisco Gràcia Lladó unloaded oxygen tanks from his truck near the mouth of Cova de sa Piqueta. Xisco and his longtime friend Guillem Mascaró were planning to spend the day exploring the subaquatic cave system on the island of Majorca, Spain.

Xisco had been cave diving as a hobby for more than 20 years. The stocky 54-year-old divorced father of two loved mapping the island's many tunnels and chambers, and contributing his findings to the growing body of scientific literature on Majorca's caves.

Guillem, a willowy 54-year-old local, had been ocean diving for decades and had started exploring caves in 2003. He was glad to be diving with Xisco, one of the most experienced cave divers on Majorca.

Xisco unfolded a map and pointed to an area about 900 metres from the cave's entrance. "There are underwater chambers here," said Xisco, "and they've never been studied." Xisco was excited at the thought that he would be seeing the rooms for the first time.

Damp air greeted the two men as they entered the cave and passed into darkness. Xisco attached four bottles of air to his belt and passed three bottles to Guillem. Satisfied they had the right amount of air – enough to get in, explore, and return, plus an extra hour in case of an emergency

– Xisco put his regulator in his mouth and lowered his head underwater. Guillem followed.

The diving partners used a simple, time-honoured tool to move through the underwater maze – thin, nylon guidelines flagged with numbered labels. If a tunnel forked, another line extended down the second passage.

The snaking path Xisco and Guillem were to follow split many times, creating a maze of potential wrong turns all but indistinguishable from one another without the lines and markers, and the arrows they placed at each intersection that pointed to the exit. Xisco noticed that the water was clear that morning and the markers were easily visible. The two men moved forwards, leaving a cloudy trail of churned up sediment in their wake.

After an hour of navigating the narrow, twisting tunnels, Xisco swam into an underwater room and began collecting rock samples. Guillem was measuring the shape and diameter of a nearby chamber.

After about another hour, Xisco glanced at his air pressure gauges

and saw his tanks were a third empty. *We each have enough air for two more hours*, he thought, *two-and-a-half tops*.

Grabbing Guillem by the shoulder, Xisco pointed to his air pressure dials. It was time to get out.

They started back the way they had come. At first the passage was wide, but as they progressed the walls closed in until Xisco's bottles were dragging and catching. The contact kicked up even more sediment, which churned around them like a thick, chocolate soup.

But the two divers followed the white cord hand over hand until they came to a rock wall, where the line suddenly ended. Xisco felt for the next section of the line – nothing.

He indicated to Guillem that he should go to a cave about 200 metres away where he knew there was air, and wait for him. He knew the air there wasn't perfect – it contained some carbon dioxide – but it was the nearest place to wait, and saving air in their tanks was important.

Xisco continued looking for the guideline. He waved his hand into the abyss. It appeared that a piece of rock where the guideline had been affixed had broken off. He pulled

off his gloves and began feeling for the line in the dark cloud that swirled around him. He swam back and forth, hands touching rock and sediment. The visibility grew worse with every movement.

After a short while, Xisco peered at his regulator and tensed. He hadn't realised how long he had spent looking for the guideline. *We've only got*

an hour of air each and we're still a kilometre from the exit, he thought. *Even if we find the right path, we might run out of air before we reach the surface*.

Xisco swam to the cave where Guillem waited for him. When he brought his head out of the water, he saw that he was in a large lake in a cavernous

room some 80 metres long and 20 metres wide. Beyond the lake he could see pointed rocks, some reaching high above the water's surface.

When he took a breath, he realised immediately that the air contained more carbon dioxide than he'd thought. It was high – maybe two to three per cent – far more than the 0.03% per cent present in regular air. He also knew that such a high concentration of carbon dioxide could have dire consequences: elevated heart rate and rapid breathing,

**Xisco
watched as
Guillem left
for the cave's
entrance.
*I hope I see
him again,
he thought***

headaches, hallucinations, paralysis, unconsciousness and death.

Xisco and Guillem climbed onto the rocks of the pitch-black room. "There's another route to the surface, but it's a bit longer," said Xisco, pointing out the path on a laminated map. "The guideline should be intact."

Examining the tanks, Guillem said, "There's only enough air for one of us to make it to the surface."

"You're smaller and quicker, you'll use less air on the way out," said Xisco. What's more, Xisco had spent many days exploring underground chambers with carbon dioxide-saturated air, and knew how to slow his breath to reduce the amount of toxic gases he inhaled.

Guillem suited up with the remaining tanks. Xisco watched as he disappeared beneath the water.

I hope I see him again, thought Xisco, drawing a shallow breath. He felt his pulse quicken, one of the first signs of carbon dioxide poisoning. And soon.

It was close to 6pm on Saturday evening.

LESS THAN an hour later, Guillem burst through the water's surface, tore his regulator from his mouth and inhaled the clean Majorcan air. His fingers shook as he dialled up the members of Grup Nord, Majorca's official caving organisation.

Within an hour, several of the island's top cave divers had

assembled in the growing darkness. One of them was Bernat Clamor, who had almost as much diving experience as Xisco.

"There may be a lot of carbon dioxide in that cave," said Bernat. "We don't know how long he has."

The group agreed that two divers familiar with the cave would go in first. Guillem marked Xisco's location on a laminated map and handed it to the men before watching them head underground.

Two hours later they returned with bad news. In the rush to reach the surface, Guillem had stirred up the water to the point that visibility was almost at zero. It was impossible to read the markers indicating which way to go when a tunnel forked.

"We're going to have to wait for the water to clear before diving again," said Bernat. It could take hours or even days for the sediment to settle. Xisco might choke to death breathing carbon dioxide, but Bernat knew that diving in water like chocolate was pointless. He didn't want to put anyone else at risk. There was nothing to do but wait.

AS XISCO SAT in the dark cave, minutes felt like hours. He was dizzy, due to the effects of the carbon dioxide in the air. And his diving watch had stopped. He had no idea that he'd been in the cave for only four to five hours.

A creeping dread gripped him.

Guillem is dead. No one knows where I am.

Turning on his headlamp, Xisco made his way off the ledge he had been perched on, and down to the lake. Then, cupping his hands, he carefully brought the clear liquid to his lips. Though much of the water in the cave network was salty, fortunately the top layer of this lake was clean and fresh.

Not so the air. Xisco laboured as he made his way back to his resting spot – the only flat surface in the cave – and groaned as a sharp pain shot through one temple. The carbon dioxide was taking hold and every extra movement – and breath – meant that he consumed more of it.

Xisco lay down and tried to stay calm. He vowed that he would only move to drink and urinate. He turned out his headlamp to preserve its battery and lay in the cold, humid darkness.

He wondered if his ex-wife had been notified yet. It had only been a year since the split, and the divorce had been devastating for Xisco. *Would she tell the kids? Were they worrying about him at that very moment?*

His thoughts returned to the divers

on the island. *They'll find me soon, he reasoned. I hope.*

ABOVE GROUND, a team of medics stood by and a psychologist was on hand. Divers and cavers from the island debated the best approach.

"We've made one attempt and no one can get more than 300 metres in," Bernat explained to two new divers on the scene. "The water is like mud."

Meanwhile, members of the local and national police were setting up tents and barricades to keep the growing crowd of reporters at bay. The general director of emergencies for the Balears Islands was on the scene, but the rescue was now directed by a

member of the Guardia Civil, the officer in charge of the Special Group of Subaquatics Activities on Majorca. After listening to various divers and law enforcement officers, he made the call.

"We wait until morning before diving again," he said to a chorus of groans.

Everyone knew the great danger Xisco was in; he might be sucking down the last gulp of toxic air his body could handle at that very minute.

It was 9.30 on Sunday night and

Xisco turned out his headlamp to preserve its battery and lay in the cold, humid darkness



Xisco, left, with Guillem at the caves. Both men remain passionate about diving

Xisco had been underground for more than 30 hours.

A LIGHT FLICKERED over the underground lake.

Xisco sat up. His head swirled at the sudden movement. The batteries in his headlamp had finally died and the darkness felt almost blinding.

What was that gurgling sound? Was someone in here with him? He listened again: silence.

I'm hallucinating, he thought. The carbon dioxide has saturated my blood. No one is coming to save me.

His thoughts went to his children, to his mother, to his sister-in-law, who was dying of cancer.

"FINALLY," said Jhon Freddy Fernandez, hurrying to pull on his wetsuit. Freddy, a dear friend of Xisco, had been waiting more than 24 hours for his turn to join the search. Now, the

call came. As he began to swim down the first tunnel, Freddy's heart lightened. The water was clear. Not crystal clear but enough to see the markers. He got to work on his task: to cut every guideline except the one leading to Xisco. He moved quickly. After two hours he emerged from the cave beaming.

"I was almost there," Freddy told the gathered team. "The next diver should be able to reach him."

Bernat leaped to his feet and grabbed his tanks. Within minutes, he was in the water. With just a single white guideline to follow, he was able to make his way through the underground maze straight towards the chamber where Xisco lay.

I must be so close, thought Bernat, after about an hour under water. The priority right now was to establish whether Xisco was alive and what kind of rescue mission it was going to be.

THIS WILL BE my tomb, thought Xisco.

Again, he heard the sound of bubbles, like a diver surfacing. Then light began dancing on the roof of the cave.

"Xisco, Xisco!" yelled a familiar voice.

Xisco turned his head and saw his old friend Bernat, dripping wet and striding towards him. The two men embraced.

"Guillem is dead, isn't he?"

"No, he's alive and waiting for you at the surface!" said Bernat.

He gave Xisco some glucose gel for energy and the two men talked until Bernat was sure Xisco was in good enough shape to make the return trip out.

"I'm going back out to let them know you're alive. The next divers will bring you air and get you out of here," explained Bernat. "Can you wait a little longer?"

"Now that I know I'm saved, I could wait another day!" said Xisco.

FOUR HOURS LATER, around 8pm on Monday, Hilari Moreno Moya and Enrique Ballesteros, both friends of

Xisco, emerged from the water in the cave, headlamps beaming. They carried tanks heavy with Nitrox – a gas containing twice the oxygen of regular air. Xisco breathed in the potent mixture and felt his body come back to life. His head began to clear and he was able to take a deep breath for the first time in 58 hours.

Xisco smiled at his two old friends: "I'm ready to go."

Sixty hours after entering Cova de sa Piqueta, at 11.10pm on Monday, Xisco walked unaided from the mouth of the cave. The cheers of an overjoyed crowd greeted him.

Guillem, who was among the waiting throng, broke into a grin when he saw Xisco. He was alive! **R**

It is a tradition with the Grup Nord that the diver who first explores a new cave can name it. Today, the chamber where Xisco and Guillem had sought refuge is known as the Room of the Three Miracles, the name Xisco gave it. The first miracle was that Xisco found a chamber with air. The second, that he survived breathing air with so much carbon dioxide, and the third, that he was able to escape the terrifying ordeal with his life.

* * *

EMBASSY EMBARRASSMENT

The US Embassy in Australia apologised late last year after someone testing a newsletter platform accidentally sent out a meeting invitation to a 'cat pyjama-jam' party featuring a photo of a cute cat dressed as a blue Cookie Monster. THEHILL.COM

Why We **PROCRA** *and How* *to Stop*

These simple tools will stop you delaying
what can be done today

BY PETR LUDWIG AND ADELA SCHICKER
FROM THE BOOK *THE END OF PROCRASTINATION*

IF YOU HAVE EVER had trouble persuading yourself to do things you should do or would like to do, you have experienced procrastination. When you procrastinate, instead of working on important meaningful tasks, you find yourself performing trivial activities.

If you are a typical procrastinator, perhaps you spend an excessive amount of time hitting the snooze button, watching TV, playing video games, checking Facebook, eating (even when you're not



STINATE



hungry), obsessively cleaning or pacing back and forth through the office. Afterwards, you feel powerless and are overcome with feelings of guilt and frustration. Once again, you end up doing nothing. Sound familiar?

Lazy people don't do anything and are just fine with it. Procrastinators, however, have the desire to actually do something but can't force themselves to start. They truly want to fulfil their obligations but just can't figure out how.

Don't confuse procrastination with relaxation either. Relaxing recharges you with energy. In stark contrast, procrastinating drains it from you. The less energy you have, the greater the chances of you putting off your responsibilities, and, once more, you will accomplish nothing.

My dad always used to say, "Petr, you need to learn how to give yourself orders." I would always answer: "What do you mean, Dad? I tell myself what to do, I just don't listen."

Seneca, the Roman philosopher, also warned: "While we waste our time hesitating and postponing, life is slipping away." This quotation reveals the main reason why learning to overcome procrastination is so important.

The most extensive meta-analysis of studies on procrastination ever

conducted indicates that failure of the ability to listen to ourselves is most likely the main reason why we put things off. The scientific name of this ability is self-regulation.

Self-regulation is the ability to consciously control your emotions. The more developed this ability is, the more often you will do what you tell yourself to do and the better you will resist temptation. Thanks to this, you will procrastinate less. Current

research indicates that willpower can be compared to a muscle. It is possible to strengthen it through training.

To overcome paralysis, you need to start by setting the bar as low as possible. Creating habits isn't about quantity; it's about small steps and regular repetition.

By making gradual increases once you learn a new habit, you can strengthen your willpower muscle. As you slowly raise the bar, your willpower will gain strength. The more powerful it is, the easier it will be for you to overcome more and more obstacles.

Learning how to wake up early, eat healthily, exercise regularly, or eliminate bad habits can all be achieved by taking small steps, too. Gradual changes are more pleasant than sudden, radical shifts. They are more enduring, and therefore the odds of

“
***Creating habits
isn't about
quantity; it's
about small steps
and regular
repetition***”



Procrastinating weighs on your mind and makes you less productive

success are much higher. Because you only have one willpower muscle for everything, if you train it to perform one activity, you can use its strength to do other things as well.

HOW TO CREATE A 'TO-DO TODAY' LIST

These ten guidelines will significantly increase the amount of tasks you are able to handle on a daily basis.

1 LAY OUT YOUR TASKS Take a blank piece of paper and write down all of the tasks you would like to do on a given day. Give each

task a concrete name. This enables you to better imagine what the task requires and thus decrease your aversion towards it. For example, labelling a task "Call the mechanic" does not evoke the same negative feelings as the too-abstract "Mechanic" might. If you are able to imagine your task, you will eliminate fear of the unknown and uncertainty.

2 SPLIT LARGE TASKS UP AND COMBINE SMALL ONES Each task should take you between 30 and 60 minutes to complete. If you have something more complicated

(such as “Writing a book”), always break it up into a set of smaller tasks (“Write two paragraphs of the book”). Large and complicated tasks are easy to avoid. By breaking large tasks up into ‘bite-sized pieces’, you will be able to significantly decrease the aversion you might have towards them.

3 VERY SMALL TASKS (“Write one email”) should be combined into one larger task (“Write all emails” or “Write 20 most important emails”). By batch processing related tasks, you will not have to shift your attention between different activities so often, and thus you will not disrupt your flow during the day.

4 COLOUR CODE YOUR PRIORITIES Draw a red circle around the tasks that are of highest priority (those that are important and urgent), draw a blue circle around those that are medium priority (those that are important but are not yet urgent), and then draw a green circle around those that are of the lowest priority (those that if you don’t do, the world won’t end, but which would still be nice to complete as a bonus).

5 DEFINE YOUR PATH FOR THE DAY Link together your tasks with arrows; the path you make should follow the best order

for completing your tasks. At the start of the day when your cognitive resources are still fresh, begin with the most difficult and high-priority tasks. Try to follow difficult tasks with less demanding ones and creative tasks with more routine ones. The ‘path’ you create is critical for fighting decision paralysis. You won’t have to spend time during the day thinking about what you should be working on.

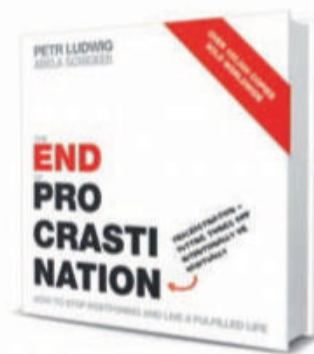
6 MAKE TIME ESTIMATES Try to plan certain times for each task; define when you will start working on it and when you want to finish it. You should stick to these times, just as you would if you had an important appointment with someone. At first, your estimates won’t be exact, but with more experience they will get better. By defining an exact time to start an activity, you have improved the odds that you will actually start.

7 FOCUS ON THE ONE THING ONLY Once you start working on a task concentrate only on that activity. You may switch your email notifications off, put your phone on silent mode, or ask your colleague not to disturb you. Clean your work area to limit distractions. By focusing on one task, you will find your state of flow more easily, and thanks to the peace you have created, nothing will disrupt it.

8 LEARN WHEN TO STOP Once you finish a task, cross it out and symbolically bring the task to a close. Some people have problems not only starting tasks but also finishing them. The first time you hold in your hands a completely crossed-out To-Do Today, you will understand how important this step is.

9 REPLENISH YOUR COGNITIVE RESOURCES Plan short breaks in between tasks so you can restore your energy. Once you get to an arrow, do something that will renew your willpower muscle. Go for a short walk around the block, head out to the park or eat a piece of fruit. Let your brain rest a bit. If you have been doing a creative task, do something with your hands. Your breaks can last only several minutes, but they will help you maintain your concentration and energy until the evening. Take breaks regularly throughout the day as a preventative measure.

10 MAKE A HABIT OUT OF CREATING A TO-DO TODAY It would be ideal if you could prepare this every evening for the following day. You will see how much better you will sleep knowing that you have the next day all planned out. It is also possible to prepare it first thing in the morning. The last item on your To-Do Today could be "Prepare To-Do Today for tomorrow". **R**



This is an edited extract from *The End of Procrastination* by Petr Ludwig and Adela Schicker. Published by Murdoch Book. Available wherever books are sold.

COME BACK LATER

A shop owner in Montignies-sur-Sambre, Belgium, successfully outsmarted criminals with an inventive plan. Faced with a gang of armed robbers, the owner told them to come back later when he'd have more money.

Apparently trying to get the most bang for their buck, the robbers obliged and left. They returned to the shop when he said to, and were welcomed by police waiting inside. The shop owner told local media he "wasn't dealing with great thinkers".

WTHR.COM





SEE THE WORLD ...

Turn the page ➞

... DIFFERENTLY

Visitors to the Cau Vang or 'golden bridge' in Vietnam are literally in good hands. The 150-metre long structure is located in the Truong Son mountain range and sits about 1400 metres above sea level. Although the bridge appears to be supported by huge stone hands, in reality they are only steel meshes coated in fibreglass with vertical pillars ensuring the design's structural integrity.

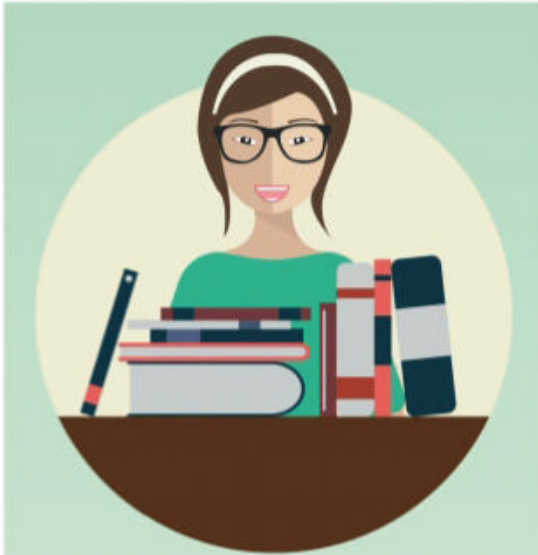
PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES/QUANGPRAHA





All in a Day's Work

HUMOUR ON THE JOB



Page Turners

Librarians share conversations that made their days.

During story time, I read a book that mentioned doughnuts growing on trees.

ME: I want to live in a world where doughnuts grow on trees!

CHILD: I want to live in a world where bananas grow on trees.

CAREGIVER: Tell the librarian how old you are.

CHILD: Terrible two!

iworkatapubliclibrary.com

WHO'S THE APRIL FOOL, THEN?

We don't want to spoil the fun for those planning some good-hearted amusements on April 1. But office pranksters beware: April Fools workplace pranks can play a cruel joke on you - and your job prospects.

Take clothing shop employee Sitra Walker who phoned her new boss from the shop to report a robbery in progress - a barefaced April Fools lie to prank her boss. But what she'd hoped would be a boss-employee bonding opportunity turned out to be an instant criminal charge for inducing panic. Walker didn't think that police would be dispatched so quickly - and her manager gave her walking papers. **HAPPYWORKER.COM**



Mr Evans realises that he is living in uncertain times.



CAREER HACK FOR COMPUTER CODERS

Arrange your first job in Spain.

That way you'll be Señor Developer from day one. @JAREK000000

YEAH, RIGHT

On *The Late Late Show*, Paul McCartney told host James Corden how he and John Lennon wrote the Beatles hit 'She Loves You' in McCartney's childhood home: "We were just finishing it up, John and I, and we were like, 'That's it. Let's play it for my dad.' So we say, 'Dad, Dad, you want to hear a song?' So we sing, 'She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah ...' and he listens to the whole song. Then he says, 'That's very nice, but son, there's enough of these Americanisms around. Couldn't you sing, She loves you, yes, yes, yes?'"

Ineffective Ways to Find a Job

The process of interviewing for a new job is an important step. Don't mess it up like these job candidates did.

INTERVIEWER: What's your greatest weakness?

CANDIDATE: Women. That's kind of why I'm looking for a new job. I had an affair with my boss's wife.

INTERVIEWER: Did you bring your references with you?

CANDIDATE: I tried. They couldn't get the time off work.

INTERVIEWER: What makes you think you're right for a job working at a fast-food restaurant?

CANDIDATE: I'm great with animals.





RECIPE FOR *Disaster*

My wife cannot cook – which absolutely does not keep her from trying

BY DAVID THORNE FROM 27BSLASH6.COM

HOLLY CANNOT COOK. She is capable of the process of cooking, but my wife cannot cook, in the same way that an octopus cannot ride a bike. It has enough arms to reach the pedals and

handlebars, but the result will rarely be a successful journey from A to B.

I once looked over Holly's shoulder to discover her crumbling Alka-Seltzer tablets onto a meal she

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN TWIGG

was preparing because “they are pretty salty and we ran out of salt”.

Another time, I walked into the kitchen to find Holly making toast. I generally feel safe eating toast that Holly has made because it requires minimal ingredients to forget, replace or experiment with. But this toast was a bit thin and soggy.

“What bread is this?” I asked.

“It’s the same bread we always have,” Holly said, pointing to the bag.

“I didn’t even know we had any brea – Oh my God!” I exclaimed. “It has a best-by date of January 2009.”

“It was in the freezer,” Holly said. “The best-by date doesn’t count if the product is frozen.”

“I’m fairly sure there is a limit,” I responded, holding up a slice of bread consisting almost entirely of frost.

“No, there isn’t,” she replied. “I saw a show once where scientists found a mammoth frozen in ice for millions of years. They thawed it out, cooked it and ate it.”

I mention all this because recently Holly stated that she was making nachos for dinner, so I was surprised to be presented with a bowl and spoon an hour later.

“What’s this?” I asked.

“The nachos were a bit runny, so I added a few cups of water,” she replied. “It’s nacho soup.”

“What are these bits in it?” I asked.

“They’re the chips.” Holly sipped

a spoonful of nachos and made a drawn-out “Mmmmmm” noise. “I put it in the blender, so there shouldn’t be big bits.”

“I’m sending out for pizza,” I said.

“You never appreciate anything I do,” replied Holly.

“That’s not true,” I said. “I appreciate everything you do. You’re a beautiful, kind, thoughtful person. But if I ordered a hamburger at McDonald’s and they handed it to me in a cup with a straw, saying, ‘Sorry, it was a bit runny, so we threw it in the blender and added two cups of water – it’s Big Mac soup,’ I would assume there was something wrong with the restaurant staff. And if they asked me, ‘Do you want fries with that?’ I surely wouldn’t reply, ‘Yes, mix them in.’”

“It would probably be good,” responded Holly. “But you would never know because you wouldn’t taste it. Even if the guy at McDonald’s spent an hour in the kitchen making it for you and burned his thumb on a saucepan.”

“Fine,” I relented, taking a spoonful and raising it to my mouth. “I’ll taste it.” Sipping the brown and yellow puree, I felt an intense burning sensation not unlike consuming a mouthful of red ants. I swallowed with considerable effort as my eyes began to water, and said, “It’s a bit spicy.”

“Yes,” said Holly. “We were out of cumin, so I used cayenne instead.” **R**

ANIMAL KINGDOM





Come, Give Me a **HUG**

Not only humans like to be close to their loved ones. The animal world has its tender moments, too

BY CORNELIA KUMFERT

Even the 'king of the beasts' needs a bit of tender loving care every now and then. These two males obviously enjoy the togetherness. In the case of lions, cuddling may help to reinforce friendships that become necessary to protect the lions' territory from intruders

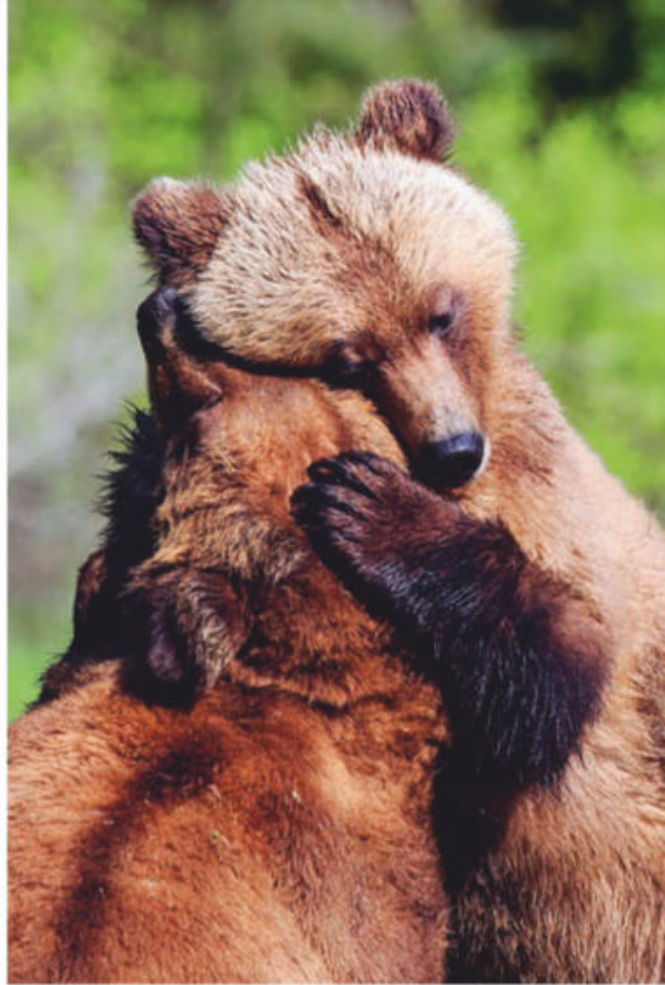


PHOTOS: (KEAS) GETTY IMAGES/SAM LIANG/EYEEM; (BEARS) GETTY IMAGES/
JOHN E MARRIOTT; (PENGUINS) GETTY IMAGES/STEFAN CHRISTMANN

◀ **Keas are known** mainly for their curiosity and propensity for pranks. These intelligent mountain parrots from New Zealand also know how to relax, preferably with a companion skilled in grooming those emerald-green feathers

▶ **Grizzly bears** are known to be violently aggressive and, above all, loners, but these two adolescents beg to differ. They decided to de-escalate their little brawl in a 'bear hug', and look almost as cute as teddy bears

▼ **For these penguin babies,** cuddling is necessary for mere survival. In sub-zero conditions, the body heat from the group prevents the individual chicks from succumbing to the icy weather. And, of course, everyone gets a stint in the middle where it is the warmest



► **Bonobos usually** find non-violent ways to settle their conflicts. These pacifists of the primates try first to hug away smaller misunderstandings, disputes or stress situations, as these two orphans from the Congo are demonstrating

▼ **The proximity** of this humpback whale mother to her calf is not just an expression of affection, it also helps protect the young animal from would-be predators. To avoid attracting such unwanted company, the mother communicates with her offspring through physical touch or 'whispered' tones



PHOTOS: (BONOBOS) GETTY IMAGES/CYRIL RUOSO/MINDEN PICTURES; (HUMPBACK WHALES) GETTY IMAGES/FABRICE GUERIN; (GIRAFFES) GETTY IMAGES/STUART DEE; (SEA ELEPHANT) GETTY IMAGES/KARL VAN GINDERDEUREN/BUITEN-BEELD/MINDEN PICTURES



▲ **Giraffes use their** extremely long necks to get to hard-to-reach food high up in trees, or to fight their rivals. These two, however, have found a different use, tenderly grooming each other's manes

◀ **The southern elephant seal** spends roughly ninety per cent of its life in water, being on land only during mating season. The males aren't exactly known to be romantics. After pairing, they immediately begin flirting with the next female. Deserted, this female comforted herself with a tight hug



Iceland's **WATER CURE**

Can the secret to the country's happiness
be found in its hot pools?

BY DAN KOIS FROM *THE NEW YORK TIMES*





N A FRIGID
February day
in Reykjavik,
I stood bare-
chested and
dripping wet

just inside the dressing room at the Vesturbæjarlaug pool, facing a long, cold walk to the outdoor hot tubs. My host was stoic, strong, a Viking. I was whining.

"I just don't want to go out there," I said. "How do you make yourself do it?"

"You must, to swim in the pool," Valdimar Hafstein said with a shrug. He is a folklorist at the University of



FOR ONE GLORIOUS
MOMENT, I FELT MY
MIND GO BLANK:
THERE WAS JUST
MY BODY ENVELOPED
IN WARMTH

Iceland who studies the country's pools. "Kids hate it, too. I have to haul my kids kicking and screaming." I took a deep breath. Wearing only Speedos – I had packed three, in honour of the island's reputation as one of the company's most avid markets – I stepped onto the deck. It was a few degrees below freezing.

Imagine the feeling you get when you hold an ice cube tight, that

combination of sting and ache, except imagine it all over your nearly nude body. Battling my long-ingrained instincts never to run at a swimming pool, I fell into a kind of brisk walk-trot, aiming for the large set of interconnected hot tubs in the centre of the complex. I'm sure I looked ridiculous. The good news: I'd never been less concerned about my appearance while wearing almost nothing in public.

Small snowflakes glittered in the sky, which at 4pm was already darkening towards dusk. I reached the largest hot tub and sank to my chin. For one glorious moment, I felt my mind go blank: there was just my body enveloped in warmth, the cold wind on my ears only heightening my delight. Behind me, Valdimar ambled across the deck, saying hello to a neighbour in another hot pot.

Every Icelandic town, no matter how small, has its own pool. There are ramshackle cement rectangles squatting under rain clouds in the sheep-strewn boonies. There are fancy aquatic complexes with multilevel hot tubs and awesome water slides. All told, there are more than 120 public pools – usually geothermally heated, mostly outdoors, open all year long – in Iceland, a country with a population of just over 350,000.

"If you don't have a swimming pool, it seems you may as well not even be a town," the mayor of Reykjavik, Dagur Eggertsson, told me. I interviewed



Myvatn Nature Baths, situated in a nature reserve

him, of course, as we relaxed together in a downtown hot tub.

These public pools, or *sundlaugs*, serve as the communal heart of Iceland, sacred places whose affordability and ubiquity are viewed as a kind of civil right. Families and teenagers and older people lounge and chat in sundlaugs every day, summer or winter. Despite Iceland's cruel climate, its remoteness and its winters of 19 hours of darkness per day, the people there are among the most contented in the world.

The more local swimming pools I visited, the more convinced I became that Icelanders' remarkable satisfaction is tied inextricably to the experience of escaping the fierce, freezing

air and sinking into warm water among their countrymen. The pools seem to be, in fact, a key to Icelandic wellbeing.

I swam in 14 pools all over the country. I met recent immigrants to the Westfjords town of Bolungarvík as they mingled with their new neighbours. I saw Icelandic parents splash with their kids to calm them before bedtime. I heard stories of divorcing couples splitting their local pools along with their possessions. I watched four septuagenarians swim laps in a northern Iceland pool while the sunrise lit up the mountains behind them and an attendant brought out foam cups of coffee balanced on a kickboard.



Scenic Seljavellir pool, first built in 1923

“I think the swimming pools are what make it possible to live here,” the young artist Ragnheidur Harpa Leifsdottir said. “You have storms, you have darkness, but the swimming pool is a place for you to find yourself again.”

FOR CENTURIES, Iceland was a nation of seamen who regularly drowned within sight of shore. One local newspaper reported in 1887 that more than 100 fishermen drowned in a single winter. Such incidents fostered an enthusiasm for swimming education. At the time, the only place to learn was a muddy ditch downstream from the hot spring where the women of Reykjavik did laundry.

Inspired by that hot spring, and using a heavily mortgaged drill that had been brought to Iceland to

search fruitlessly for gold, the city soon tapped the underground hot water generated by Iceland’s volcanic underbelly.

Iceland’s first geothermal heat flowed into 60 homes and three civic buildings: a school, a hospital and a swimming pool. The national energy authority offered no-risk loans to villages across the country to encourage geothermal drilling, and within a generation, the ancient turf house had nearly disappeared from Iceland, replaced by modern apartment buildings and homes, all of them so toasty warm that even on winter nights most Icelanders leave a window open.

With hot water flowing through the country – and swimming education made mandatory in all Icelandic schools in 1943 – pools soon popped up in every town.

"Because of the weather, we don't have proper plazas in the Italian or French style," the writer Magnus Sveinn Helgason explained to me. "Beer was banned in Iceland until 1989, so we don't have the pub tradition of England or Ireland."

THE POOL IS ICELAND'S social space: where families meet neighbours, where newcomers first receive welcome, where rivals can't avoid one another. It can be hard for reserved Icelanders, who "don't typically talk to their neighbours in the store or in the street," to forge connections, Mayor Dagur told me. (Icelanders generally use patronymic and matronymic last names and refer to everyone, even the mayor, by first name.) "In the hot tub, you must interact," he continued. "There's nothing else to do."

Not only must you interact; you must do so in a state of quite literal exposure. Most Icelanders have a story about taking foreign visitors to the pools and then seeing them baulk in horror at the strict requirement to strip naked, shower and scrub their bodies with soap from head to toe.

Men's and women's locker rooms feature posters highlighting all the regions you must lather assiduously: head, armpits, undercarriage, feet. Icelanders are very serious about these rules, which are necessary because the pools are only lightly chlorinated; tourists and shy teenagers

are often scolded by pool wardens for insufficient showering.

Icelanders are quite unselfconscious about nudity in the service of pool cleanliness. This was made most clear to me, perhaps, in a dressing room in the town Isafjördur, where a chatty liquor-store manager named Snorri Grimsson told me a long story about the time a beautiful Australian girl asked him to go to the pool but then revealed that she doesn't shower before swimming. He mugged a look of comic horror, then brought home the kicker: "It was a very difficult decision. Thankfully, the pool was closed!"

I could tell his fellow Icelanders found this hilarious. My own appreciation of it was somewhat impeded by Snorri's delivery of it in the nude, his left foot on the sink, stretching like a ballet dancer at the barre.

"It's wonderful," an actress named Salome Gunnarsdóttir told me in the pool one evening. "Growing up in a bathing culture, we see all kinds of real women's bodies. Sixty-five year olds, middle-aged, pregnant women. Not just people in magazines or on TV."

As a journalist, I will never forget the uniquely Icelandic experience of shaking hands with handsome Mayor Dagur and then, just minutes later, interviewing him as we each bared all. I found this disconcerting at first, but eventually there was something comforting about seeing all those other chests and



The Hofsvöllur infinity pool has an amazing vista

butts and guts – which for the most part belonged to normal human bodies, not sculpted masterpieces. And that comfort extends out into the pool proper, where you might be covered – only a little, in my case – but are still on display.

But near-nudity, by encouraging a slight remove from others, also allows the visitor to focus, in a profound and unfamiliar way, on his own body, on its responses and needs. Despite it being a social hub, the pool also cultivates inwardness.

The results of a questionnaire distributed by Valdimar's research team suggested that women in particular go to the pool to seek solitude. According to women I talked to, most everyone respects the posture of aquatic reverie – head tilted back against the pool wall,

eyes closed, mouth smiling a tiny smile of satisfaction – that you adopt when you come to the pool wanting to be left alone.

Sigurlaug Dagsdottir, a graduate student researching the pools, speculated that the sundlaugs' social utility in Icelandic communities derives in part from the intimacy of the physical experience: In the pool, she said, you can “take off the five layers of clothing that usually separate you from everyone else.”

As such, the pools are a great leveler. The filmmaker Jon Karl Helgason, who is shooting a documentary about Iceland's pools, said, “When people are in the swimming pool, it doesn't matter if you are a doctor or a taxi driver.” His girlfriend, Fridgerdur Gudmundsdottir, added, “Everyone is dressed the same.”

ON THE WAY from Reykjavik to Keflavik airport is the Blue Lagoon, a luxurious hot-water spa that is one of Iceland's most popular tourist destinations. There, you can shower in private stalls and float in mineral-rich water – discharge from the nearby Svartsengi power plant.

My final day in Iceland, I turned off the highway just after the Blue Lagoon and instead drove into one of the towns, the port Reykjanesbaer. The lobby of the town's pool is dotted, fittingly, by a series of porthole-like windows. The woman working at the desk asked, "Is this your first time in an Iceland swimming pool?"

"Nope," I said with some pleasure.

The 36-38°C hot pot was full of enormous men with muscular physiques and also a small girl in a pink ruffled bathing suit. The largest of the Muscle Men rose from the water, picked up the girl and carried her, giggling, to the family pool. His biceps sported a tattoo of a roaring bear consumed by flames.

This time I didn't approach anyone, didn't ask any questions. I didn't speak at all. I concentrated on what I could feel: the water pressing lightly on my skin, the wind prickling my beard. All around me was the soft white noise of a community. The conversation; the connection; the freedom, within that flurry of sociability, to withdraw and simply be within yourself. It called to mind something a Ph.D. student named Katrin Gudmundsdottir told me on my first day in Iceland. She was describing a native Icелander's sense of comfort while immersed in her neighbourhood sundlaug. When I thought of what she said, a perfect G chord strummed inside me. "It's not exactly like you're happy," she had mused. "It's that you know how to be in the swimming pool."

The sun was low on the horizon, bright but evanescent. The only other thing in the crystal-blue sky was the contrail of a jet, pointed to the west. I closed my eyes. I was in the pool. **R**

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES, © 2016 BY THE NEW YORK TIMES CO., NYTIMES.COM

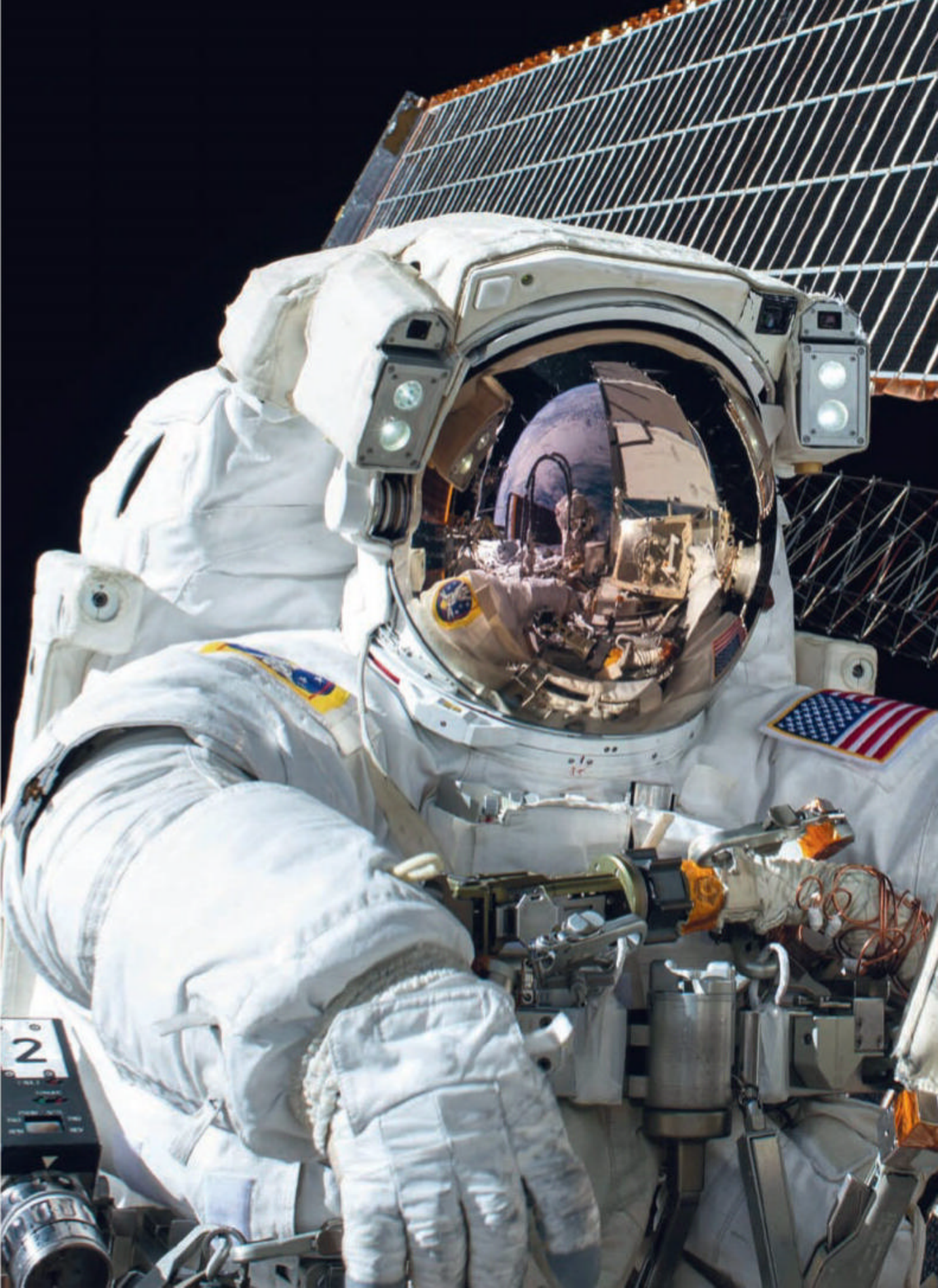
CHEW CHEW TRAIN

Tokyo's notoriously crowded train metro system is trying to ease the morning commute with free soba noodles and tempura. The metro system is offering vouchers for the buckwheat noodles and fried snacks to commuters who get on the train before rush hour, which runs from eight to nine in the morning. **NPR**

A WALK IN SPACE

Open the hatch of the
International Space Station,
clamber out – and experience the
majesty of the universe through
the eyes of an astronaut

BY SCOTT KELLY
FROM THE BOOK *ENDURANCE:
A YEAR IN SPACE*



A veteran of four space flights, Scott Kelly commanded the International Space Station (ISS) on three expeditions. In 2015 and 2016 he spent 340 days on the space station, which circles more than 400 kilometres above the Earth at 28,100 kilometres per hour. During that time he saw 13 crewmates come and go, and did three “gruelling, exhilarating spacewalks”. Here he describes one of the times he stepped out of the hatch ... and into the void.

“**T**hree crewmates leave in April, and three new guys arrive in July, including first-time space travellers Kjell Lindgren, as well as Kimiya Yui, one of seven active Japanese astronauts. For our spacewalk, Kimiya will help us get dressed and manage the airlock and its systems. His job may seem mundane, but it is critical. If Kimiya makes the smallest mistake – puts on my boot incorrectly, for instance – I could die a horrible death.

For nearly as long as human beings have been going to space we have been determined to climb out of the spacecraft. It’s partly just to achieve the fantasy of floating in the immensity of the cosmos.

But spacewalks are also a practical necessity – to move from one spacecraft to another, to explore the surface of planetary bodies, or in our case, to perform maintenance and repairs on the exterior of the spacecraft.

I AM FLOATING in the US airlock of the International Space Station (ISS), wearing a 113 kilogram spacesuit. The air is slowly being pumped out of the airlock. I can’t see Kjell’s face because we are crammed into a compartment the size of a compact car, at odd angles, his head down near my feet.

Kjell is EV2 (extravehicular crew member 2) on this spacewalk. This is his first time in space. I am EV1, the leader, because I have more experience. I am 51 years old, and on my fourth journey into space. But this would be the first time outside the station for either of us.

I have been in this suit for four hours now. “How are you doing, Kjell?” I ask, staring directly at his boots.

“Great,” Kjell says and gives me a thumbs-up that I can barely see through the bottom of my visor. Any normal person, upon experiencing the air leaving the airlock around them, would be somewhere between apprehensive and terrified. But Kjell and I have trained for this, and we feel prepared.

Kjell was born in Taiwan to a Taiwanese mother and a Swedish-American father. They moved to America and then England. But Kjell always wanted to be an astronaut, and so he applied to the US Air Force Academy. He was admitted and did well there. Then, like me, he became a pilot, flew jets for the military, became a test pilot, and then applied to NASA.

My twin brother Mark and I were born in New Jersey in 1964. We were both risk-takers. In 1995, after he earned his masters degree in aeronautical engineering and I had been a naval aviator, we both applied to NASA to become an astronaut. Mark did well in his interview, and later, when I was called for an interview, he coached me on what to expect – written tests, psychological tests, personal interviews and extensive medical testing. Then in May 1996, we both got the call. It was the first time NASA had ever selected relatives to be astronauts. On December 19, 1999, I took off on the space shuttle for my first space flight. More than 15 years later I actually walked in space.

A CRITICAL GLITCH

Suddenly a series of loud bangs reverberates through the airlock, a sound I've never heard in training. It's like someone knocking on a door loudly and urgently. Then it's quiet.

I mention the sound to the ground [control]. They tell me it's normal, one



Scott Kelly (bottom) and Kjell Lindgren check and service their spacesuits

of the things that happens when air is sucked out of the airlock. No one thought to tell us about this in training – or maybe I just forgot. I've practised this moment many times, wearing a spacesuit and being lowered into a giant swimming pool to simulate weightlessness, at the Johnson Space Center in Texas. But it's different doing it for real, in space, with no safety divers to help us if things go wrong.

Once the airlock is nearly at vacuum, Kjell and I do a series of checks on our spacesuits to make sure they are not leaking. This process consists of a series of switch



The multi-nation ISS is the largest human-made body in low Earth orbit

throws that are extremely difficult to do while wearing a spacesuit with its bulky gloves. To make things worse we can't see the controls, so we have to use mirrors attached to our wrists to see what we're doing.

Once the airlock is down to complete vacuum we will turn our water switch on, allowing water to flow through the cooling system to control the temperature in our suits. We can't do this prematurely because the water can then freeze and crack the lines.

When the airlock is not quite at a vacuum, Kjell says, "Houston – and Scott – I just hit my water switch on/off."

I take a breath to steady myself. "You cycled it?" He had just done the very thing I was worried about ...

and as EV1 should have warned him about.

"Yeah."

Our capsule communicator (capcom) for the spacewalk is Tracy Dyson, my crewmate on a previous flight. "Houston copies," she replies. "Kjell, can you tell us how long it was on?"

"Less than half a second," Kjell says. He sounds miserable. We've already spent hours today getting ready for this spacewalk. We do not want to have to start all over – not to mention the possibility that he has damaged his suit. The spacesuit experts will not allow us to proceed if they cannot guarantee Kjell's safety in the vacuum of space. The most important thing is that we both finish the day alive.

I'm trying to keep Kjell's head in the game. "It's happened before," I tell him. "Don't worry about it." I wish I could make eye contact with him to see how he's doing.

"Yeah. No worries," Kjell replies in a flat tone completely at odds with his words. Astronauts have seen their careers permanently affected by mistakes like this.

"It'll be all right," I say, talking to myself as much as I'm talking to him.

WHEN DOWN IS UP

We are told we can open the hatch and enjoy the view while they decide on a course of action. I release the lock on the hatch handle that releases the 'dogs,' the bolts that attach the hatch to the surrounding structure. I have

to pull the hatch, but with nothing to hook my feet onto, I'm pulling myself towards the hatch almost as much as I'm pulling it towards me.

I tug and push for a few minutes, and finally the hatch cracks open. The reflected light of Earth rushes in with the most abrupt and shocking clarity I've ever seen. On Earth we look at everything through the diffusing layers of the atmosphere. Here, in the emptiness of space, the sun's light is overwhelming.

Inside my spacesuit I hear the comforting noise of the fan moving air around inside my suit. The helmet has a faint chemical smell. Through the earpiece I can hear the voices of Tracy in Houston and Kjell a metre away.

The surface of the planet, 400 kilometres below my face, is whizzing by at 28,100 kph. Finally, the ground tells me and Kjell to go outside the hatch, where we can move around better, so I can check over Kjell's suit for a leak. In the cold of space, a leak would look like snow shooting out of the backpack of his suit.

I grab both the handrails, getting ready to pull myself out. I have the sensation of climbing up, as if out of the sunroof of a car. The large blue dome of Earth hovers over my head like some alien planet in a science fiction film. For a moment I am disoriented. I am looking for the attachment point, the small ring where I hook my safety tether, but I can't find it.

Like any highly trained pilot, I

know how to compartmentalise, to push thoughts out of my mind that aren't helping me complete the task at hand. I focus on what is in front of me – my gloves, the handrail – and ignore the looming Earth above. I take the hook from my safety tether off the little workstation attached to the front of my spacesuit, and secure it to one of the rings just outside the airlock, checking to make sure it is locked. Like putting a plane's landing gear down before landing, this is one of those things you absolutely do not want to screw up. If you become untethered from the craft and start to float away you are in big trouble.

The US spacesuits include simple propulsive jets to manoeuvre in space. But you do not want to have to rely on them – it's too hard to manoeuvre back to the space station and too easy to run out of fuel. If you become detached and run out of fuel and the station is just one centimetre from your glove tips, it may as well be a kilometre. The result will be the same. You will die.

Once I am certain my tether is secured, I remove Kjell's tether from me and attach it to the outside of the station as well. Then Kjell starts handing me bags of equipment we will need for our work. I secure each of them to the circular handrail outside the station. Once we have everything, I give Kjell the signal to exit the airlock.

Tracy talks to us from mission control, telling me step-by-step how to

check Kjell's life support for signs of water having frozen. I'm looking him over from head to toe, but everything looks normal. There are no snowflakes, I am happy to report to the ground. Kjell and I both breathe a sigh of relief. Our spacewalk will proceed.

We both go over each other's helmet lights, helmet cameras, mini-workstations, jet pack handles, checking to make sure everything is properly stowed. Then we check our tethers one more time. You can't be too careful with tethers.

Nearly five hours after getting into our spacesuits, we are ready to get to work.

PREPARING FOR THE WALK

Getting ready for a spacewalk takes a great deal of time. We plan in advance as thoroughly as we can. We prepare the spacesuits, check and double-check all of the components that will keep us alive in space, organise and prepare the tools we will

use – custom designed for use in zero gravity with our bulky gloves.

I've been awake since 5.30am. I put on a diaper and the liquid cooling garment we wear under our spacesuits. I eat a quick breakfast, then make my way to the airlock to get suited up.

Kjell and I spend an hour breathing pure oxygen to reduce the amount of nitrogen in our blood so we won't get the bends – decompression sickness. My suit includes a life support system that keeps oxygen flowing, scrubs the carbon dioxide that I exhale, and keeps water flowing through the tubes so I don't get overheated. Each suit costs about US\$12 million and weighs about 113 kilograms on Earth. Up here, of course, the suit is weightless, but it still has mass and bulk, making it difficult to manoeuvre.

TRACY DYSON'S VOICE breaks the silence. "All right guys," she says. "With Scott leading, we will begin translating to your respective work sites." By

THE FIRST SPACEWALKER

"The first spacewalk was carried out in 1965 by Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Arkhipovich Leonov. He was out for 12 minutes, then had trouble getting back through the narrow opening of the hatch. He had to let some air out of the suit to

struggle back through – and as the pressure dropped he nearly passed out.

Since then more than 200 people have successfully suited up and floated out into the blackness of space. While some of the challenges

of spacewalks have gotten easier, they are no less dangerous.

A few years ago astronaut Luca Parmitano's helmet began filling up with water, raising the terrifying spectre of an astronaut drowning in space."



A stunning view of the Earth from an ISS porthole

‘translate’ she means to move ourselves, hand over hand, along a path of rails attached to the outside of the station. On Earth, walking is done with feet; in space, it’s done with the hands.

“Roger that,” I tell Tracy.

I translate out to my first work site, on the giant truss of the space station, occasionally looking back to make sure my tether doesn’t get snagged on anything. I am struck by how damaged the outside of the space station is. Micrometeoroids and orbital debris have been striking the hull for 15 years, creating small pits and scrapes as well as holes in the handrails, creating jagged edges.

I am not scared, which is a testament to our training and my ability to compartmentalise. If I were to take a moment to ponder what I’m doing, I might completely freak out. When the sun is out I can feel its intense heat.

When it sets, 45 minutes later, I can feel the depths of the cold, from 130°C to -230°C in minutes. We have glove heaters to keep our fingers warm, but nothing for our toes. My feet quickly become so cold it’s distracting.

The brilliance of the planet is startling. It’s different seeing the Earth from inside a spacecraft, through multiple layers of laminated glass, and seeing it out here through the thin layer of my clear plastic visor. I take in the stunning blue, the texture of the clouds, the various landscapes of the planet, the glowing atmosphere edging on the horizon, a delicate sliver that makes all life on Earth possible.

My first task is to remove insulation from a switching unit, a giant circuit breaker that distributes power from the solar arrays to the equipment, so the unit can later be removed by the main robotic arm. Kjell’s first job is to



Lindgren and Kelly on their second spacewalk

put a thermal blanket on the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer, a particle physics experiment. It needs to be protected from the sun if it's going to continue to send back data – it's getting too hot.

Instruments like the spectrometer have transformed our understanding of the universe in recent years. There are ten times as many galaxies as we had previously thought. And we know now that less than five per cent of the matter in the universe is actually observable. Finding dark energy and dark matter is the next challenge for astrophysics, and the spectrometer is searching for it.

MY JOB, removing the insulation, is relatively simple. But as with everything we do in zero gravity, it is harder than you would think – sort of like trying to pack your suitcase if it was nailed to the ceiling. I slowly

remove the insulation and stuff it into a bag, and when I'm finished I get congratulations for a job well done from the ground. It would normally be a good time to break for lunch, but that's not on the schedule. I can sip water through a straw in my helmet. But that's it.

The next task for me is working on the hand of the robot arm. Without it we can't capture and bring in the visiting vehicles that deliver food, supplies and other astronauts. Once I am secured in my foot restraint, I am facing out towards Earth. I can watch the stunning view splayed out below my feet as the Earth goes by.

I'm using a grease gun. But the experience is disorienting, with the grease floating in space, the sun rising and setting every 90 minutes, the planet spinning majestically underfoot. For several hours I wield the tool like a five year old with finger

paint. Small beads of grease jump off the gun as if they have a will of their own. Some of them come towards me, which could cause a serious problem if the grease starts to coat the faceplate of my helmet. I may not be able to see to find my way back in.

My hands are soon aching to the point where I think I might not be able to move them. My knuckles are rubbed raw, the muscles beyond fatigue.

“THAT WAS INSANE”

I work with Kimiya as he manoeuvres the robot arm to place it where I need it. I can't see inside and can only hope the grease is going in the right place. We are past six and a half hours when we decide to call it a day and head back to the airlock.

But we still have the toughest part of the spacewalk in front of us. Kjell and I must manoeuvre ourselves back into the airlock.

Kjell goes first and guides his bulky suit through the hatch without getting hung up on anything. Once inside, he attaches his safety tether. Then I release his safety tether from the outside of the station, and attach it to myself. I swing my legs over my head and flip upside down into the airlock, so I will be facing the hatch when I close it.

By the time we are both inside we are breathing hard. My next step is to close the hatch, which doesn't fit right anymore. It's been damaged by

the sun, like most equipment exposed to harsh rays.

My hands are completely spent. But despite my fatigue I manage to get the hatch securely closed and locked. As the air hisses in around us, Kjell and I are both still breathing hard. We have a wait of about 15 minutes, punctuated by a few leak checks to make sure the hatch is properly closed, while the airlock returns to the pressure of the station. As we sit I struggle to equalise my ears by pressing my nose against a pad in my helmet and blowing. Later I will discover that I have burst some blood vessels in my eye in the process.

We have been in our suits for 11 hours now.

“That was insane,” I say.

“Yeah,” agrees Kjell. “I'm beat.”

After the hatch opens, Kimiya helps us remove our helmets and then our suits. Kjell and I remove our long underwear and dispose of our diapers. We take a quick “shower” (move the dried sweat around on our bodies with wipes, then towel off) and eat some food for the first time in 14 hours.

I decide that this spacewalk is definitely the “type two” kind of fun – fun when it's done. I'm not quite sure that I ever want to do it again. But Kjell and I both know we are scheduled for another spacewalk in nine days. And I know by that time, I will be ready for it.” **R**

EXTRACTED FROM *ENDURANCE: A YEAR IN SPACE, A LIFETIME OF DISCOVERY*.
BY SCOTT KELLY, © 2017 SCOTT KELLY. PUBLISHED BY DOUBLEDAY



Taurus APRIL 20 - MAY 20

Surprises such as gifts, parties and celebrations are on the menu with all the ingredients for a fun birthday month. Along with good times with family and friends from the 20th onwards, the first week of April may bring a happy surprise or sudden change regarding a birth or other people's money. Before you party, you may feel like some time out, so if you can take a mini break or long weekend the first half of April would be perfect. Then, you'll be prepared if out of the blue around Easter, an issue around a work relationship or health arises. Stay cool at work if the heat is on. This is also a good time to adopt an easy and health-affirming lifestyle hack such as starting to do short bursts of exercise daily. As much as you prefer life on an even keel, wake-up calls and electrifying events will pop up to help you reinvent yourself in the next few years.

BEST DAYS: April 5, 7-8

Your STARS

BY JANICE JONES

Gemini MAY 21 - JUNE 21

You're feeling energetic and luck is on your side. It's a great time to catch up with friends, network or expand your social circle. Later in April, a test involving children, romance or a creative project may arise. Look at the facts and don't add fuel to the fire. **BEST DAYS:** April 9-11

Cancer JUNE 22 - JULY 22

Home means much more than bricks and mortar to you. Events will push you to look at your beliefs around belonging, and what you value about home, family and domestic life. Get these straight and you'll stand strong wherever you are. **BEST DAYS:** April 5, 12-14

Leo JULY 23 - AUG 22

You'll be focused on people from faraway places, study or overseas travel. There are also good reasons for that spring in your step mid-month. Later, if a drama involving siblings or neighbours appears, your good humour will help smooth things over. **BEST DAYS:** April 14-15

THE ASTROLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS ON THIS PAGE ARE FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY

Virgo AUG 23 - SEPT 22

This month you may be receiving rather than giving as a matter to do with an inheritance or property gets a positive push from the stars. A hitch around money or ethics might arise later in the month so keep an eye out for anything or anyone dodgy. **BEST DAYS:** April 16-18

Libra SEPT 23 - OCT 22

Be prepared to see the best and worst in partners of all kinds within a short period this month. Keeping the peace is always your priority so be mindful of what you say and a happy ending will prevail. Stay true to who you are even in a challenging situation. **BEST DAYS:** April 5, 18-20

Scorpio OCT 23 - NOV 22

Longing to make a fresh start at work or begin a healthy routine? Your timing is perfect to get started. Later in April, you may be feeling over-sensitive so check the facts before you react. Trust your gut instinct if it's telling you someone isn't playing fair. **BEST DAYS:** April 2, 20-21

Sagittarius NOV 23 - DEC 21

Positive opportunities and helpful people have been appearing in your life lately thanks to lucky Jupiter in your sign. You may be missing this positive influence but the next few weeks will give you space to create a fresh new angle for the rest of the year. **BEST DAYS:** April 5, 22-23

Capricorn DEC 22 - JAN 20

Enjoy domestic bliss in the area of home and family early in the month. Later, you may be torn between home, family and career as unfair demands are made on your time. Put healthy boundaries in place and place yourself higher on your to-do list. **BEST DAYS:** April 12, 24-26

Aquarius JAN 21 - FEB 18

Good fortune is on your side in early April and may appear via relatives or neighbours. Later in the month, someone may throw a glitch in your plans for overseas travel or study. Aren't sure you can trust someone? Investigate before committing. **BEST DAYS:** April 1, 27-28

Pisces FEB 19 - MAR 20

It's time to go for gold in love or a creative project in early April. The stars are also aligned for good communication. You're in sync with the planet of good fortune so start doing the work to make a dream a reality today. Act as if it's impossible to fail. **BEST DAYS:** April 2-4, 29-30

Aries MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

A double dose of happiness is on the cards. The planets of love and luck link to your sign this month. Keep your motivation high and you'll reap the benefits. Make the most of a chance to get a special project under way in the first week of April for good results. **BEST DAYS:** April 5-6, 20-21

RD Recommendations



Movies



Shazam! (Action, Comedy, Fantasy)

There's a new DC Comics superhero in town in the guise of the wise-cracking Shazam. Billy Batson (Asher Angel) is a 14-year-old foster kid who morphs into a colourful hero with an adult's body (played by Zachary Levi) but a schoolboy's sense of humour. He's a very different kind of caped crusader

but is determined to help save the world with his super strengths (once he works out exactly what they are). Billy's loyal best friend Freddy Freeman (Jack Dylan Grazer) is his super sidekick who helps defeat the deadly forces of supervillain Dr Thaddeus Sivana (Mark Strong). Great family fun.

COMPILED BY KATHY BUCHANAN

The Aftermath (Drama, History)

Temptation is the core of this historical drama set in Hamburg, Germany, in 1946 in the aftermath of WWII. When Rachel (Keira Knightley) is reunited with British colonel husband Lewis (Jason Clarke) she thinks they'll finally have time to rebuild their relationship. However, emotionally unavailable Lewis is charged with rebuilding the post-war city and leaves his wife alone in a mansion with the original owners, the extremely handsome German widower Stefan Lubert (Alexander Skarsgård) and his troubled daughter. Based on the best-selling novel by Rhidian Brook, there are no big surprises with how this passionately plays out. It is a sumptuously filmed and well-acted tale of forbidden love and the consequences of daring to chase happiness.



Breakthrough (Bio, Drama)

When 14-year-old John Smith (Marcel Ruiz) fell through an icy Missouri lake, he was trapped for 15 minutes and had no pulse for 43 minutes after being rescued. His mother Joyce (Chrissy Metz) refused to give up, praying for a miracle and the recovery of her beloved son. Adapted from Joyce Smith's book *The Impossible*, there's a compelling and inspirational true story here regardless of your religion or spiritual outlook. A story of community based on real events.



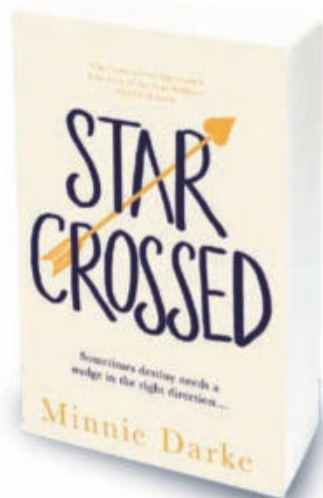
Books



The Travelling Vet

Jonathan Cranston (ALLEN & UNWIN)

Did you ever dream of being a vet? This is a fun and fascinating read full of passionate stories about all creatures great and small. Cranston is a dedicated British vet based in the Cotswolds who knew from the age of six that he wanted to care for animals. Today, he looks after everything from elephants to snow leopards, giant pandas, rhinos, giraffes and has even consulted about dinosaurs for the *Jurassic Park* film franchise. He describes his adventures with wild animals in Africa and facing tricky questions such as how to microchip a pet armadillo who is covered in a centimetre of armoured plating?



Star-Crossed

Minnie Darke

(PENGUIN/MICHAEL JOSEPH)

When cadet magazine journalist Justine (Sagittarius) bumps into her childhood sweetheart Nick (Aquarius), she hatches a quirky plan. If she has anything to do with it, their love is set in the stars. Fortunately, she starts to work on the *Star's* astrology column, which just happens to be Nick's favourite magazine. Aspiring actor Nick needs more than a little nudging to get him to play his part in her star-crossed romance, which adds to the fun. This is a fantastic light-hearted love story in the vein of Marian Keyes and David Nicholls.

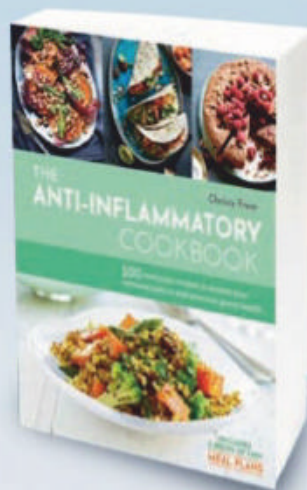
PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

The Anti-Inflammatory Cookbook

Chrissy Freer (MURDOCH BOOKS)

Inflammation is a key word when it comes to health and, according to this nutritionist, eating unprocessed food is crucial for helping reduce side effects such as weight gain, brain fog, headaches mood issues and more. This enticing cookbook comes with an easy two-week meal plan and an appealing selection of

100 recipes from which to choose. There are mains including Moroccan chicken soup and chia crusted salmon (below), and sides such as rainbow slaw and roasted garlic, parmesan and olive flat bread. Tasty treats such as kale chips, banana bread, and strawberry, chia and ginger jam will delight. And the



protein-packed muesli with dried apple, pepitas and almonds will truly hit the spot.



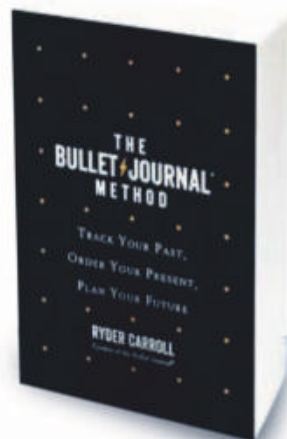
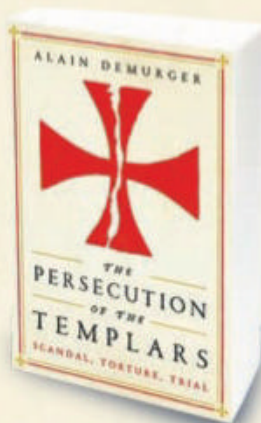
PHOTO: JULIE RENOUF



The Persecution of the Templars

Alain Demurger (PROFILE BOOKS)

The trials of the mysterious and prosperous Knights Templar are the focus of this expertly researched book. Devout Christians, they ruled military operations during the medieval period. When French King Philip IV accused them of heresy, scandalous confessions were made under torture. In 1314, leaders Jacques de Molay and Geoffroy de Charnay were burned at the stake and the order dissolved. Yet the legend of the Knights Templar and their work during the Crusades still permeates popular culture. Although the subject matter is confronting, readers can be assured of its historical accuracy because the accounts are based on the records of the interrogation of 231 French Templars.



The Bullet Journal Method

Ryder Carroll
(HARPERCOLLINS)

Becoming the pilot, instead of the passenger, of your life is the promise of this clever self-monitoring organisational system. Austrian Ryder Carroll originally created the Bullet Journal Method to help with his ADD. What began as a 'to do list' and note-taking activity decades ago for Carroll, led him to use his method to help friends and eventually the world via a popular TED talk. This stylish hard-cover manual has accessible explanations and clever ways to boost both your daily life and long-term choices. It's a genuinely practical and useful self-help book.



Podcasts



RD Talks: Jan's Journey to Peace

This is another poignant podcast from RD Talks. In this quick yet heartfelt story, a young nurse gains inspiration from the courage of her patients. Despite living with her own cancer diagnosis, she helps her patients make the most out of every single day.



You Must Remember This

Love the Golden Age of Hollywood? This podcast by Karina Longworth covers screen sirens such as pin-up Gina Lollobrigida, who inspired obsession from movie mogul Howard Hughes, 'It' Girl Clara Bow and 'Latin Lover' Rudolph Valentino, whose death is still shrouded in mystery.



Slow Burn

If you're fascinated with political scandal, you'll devour the first season of this podcast by Leon Neyfakh, which deftly covers the infamous 1970s Woodward and Bernstein 'Watergate' investigation. The second season looks at then-US President Bill Clinton's 1998 impeachment.

HOW TO GET PODCASTS TO LISTEN ON THE WEB: Google the website for 'Slow Burn', for example, and click on the play button. **TO DOWNLOAD:** Download an app such as Podcatchers or iTunes on your phone or tablet and simply search by title.

Puzzle Answers *See page 134*

THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

\$21, with seven \$3 chips and with two \$8 chips plus five \$1 chips.

LONG ODDS

1 in 1,000,000,000 (one billion).

CROSSED LETTERS

D	A	D	C	A
A	C	A	B	C
D	A	B	D	A
B	C	D	B	C
C	B	C	D	B

SUDOKU

4	9	3	7	8	6	1	5	2
7	2	5	3	1	4	9	8	6
6	1	8	2	5	9	3	7	4
3	7	2	8	6	5	4	9	1
1	8	6	4	9	3	7	2	5
5	4	9	1	7	2	8	6	3
9	3	4	5	2	8	6	1	7
2	6	1	9	3	7	5	4	8
8	5	7	6	4	1	2	3	9

Puzzles

BY MARCEL DANESI

Place one of A, B, C or D into each of the 25 empty cells so that the quantities of letters in each row and column are as indicated by the numbers. Identical letters cannot be next to each other either horizontally or vertically.

SUDOKU TO SOLVE THIS PUZZLE...

You have to put a number from 1 to 9 in each square so that:

- every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9) without repeating any of them; and
- each of the 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numerals, none repeated.

		3				1		
		5	3	1	4	9		
6				5				4
3			8		5			1
1		6				7		5
5			1		2			3
9				2				7
		1	9	3	7	5		
		7				2		

LONG ODDS (EASY)

Jade buys a ticket for a local sweepstake with a 1-in-1000 chance of winning. Meanwhile, her partner buys a ticket for a national sweepstake with a 1-in-1,000,000 chance of winning. What are the chances that they both win their respective sweepstakes?



BRAIN POWER

brought to you by



JUICE UP



TEST YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Trivia



1. In 2012, Nicola Adams became the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal in which sport? **2 points**

2. What Danish explorer has both a strait and a sea named for him? **1 point**

3. Former British PM Tony Blair and author Ernest Hemingway both converted to what religion? **1 point**

4. What country's rapid economic growth in the late 20th century was dubbed the 'Miracle on the Han River'? **2 points**

5. Name the Colombian novelist, who, according to his *New York Times* obituary, was one of few writers "embraced by both critics and a mass audience"? **2 points**

6. The Scandinavian region of Lapland is home to what distinctive ethnic group? **2 points**

14. Roald Dahl changed the title of his children's novel *James and the Giant Cherry*, opting for what fruit instead? **1 point**

7. Which type of dog has breeds called Scottish, Welsh and Irish? **1 point**

8. What kind of 'battle' was held each year at West Point, the US's oldest military academy, until participants got hurt in 2015? **2 points**

9. How many whole tones between pitches are in the musical octave? Six, eight, or 14? **1 point**

10. Named after a notable suffragist, the 'Matilda effect' refers to women being denied recognition in what field? **2 points**

11. Their capital at Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) was founded in 1325. Who were they? **1 point**

12. What actress starred in the movies *King Kong* (2005), *Mulholland Drive* and *Birdman*? **1 point**

13. How many sides does an octagon have? **1 point**

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. Boxing. 2. Vitis Bering. 3. Roman Catholic. 4. South Korea. 5. Gabriel García Márquez. 6. The Sami. 7. Terrier. 8. A pillow fight. 9. Six. 10. Science. 11. The Aztecs. 12. Naomi Watts. 13. Eight. 14. A peach.

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Ugly-sounding Words

Disagreeable to the ear. Grating. These are just a couple of ways to describe this month's quiz, which features some of the worst-sounding words in English. Warning: do not read aloud.

BY ROB LUTES

1. lugubrious – A: slow moving.
B: exaggeratedly mournful.
C: boring.

2. putrid – A: rude. B: oily. C: foul.

3. cacophony – A: discordant mixture of sounds.
B: shoddy wooden structure.
C: illogical series of statements.

4. viscous – A: poisonous.
B: sticky. C: insulting.

5. jowl – A: bog in a valley. B: lower part of the cheek. C: shallow burrow.

6. maggot – A: soft-bodied, legless grub. B: threaded wooden bolt.
C: indentation.

7. crepuscular – A: infected.
B: relating to twilight. C: imposing.

8. wimple – A: cry of pain.
B: complaint. C: cloth headdress.

9. fester – A: get worse through neglect. B: evaporate slowly.
C: collapse.

10. squab – A: sofa. B: ditch. C: tent.

11. fecund – A: friendly.
B: fruitful. C: soft.

12. curd – A: female yak.
B: fragrant herb for infusing vodka.
C: thick substance that forms when milk sours.

13. seepage – A: slow escape of a liquid or gas through porous material. B: loss of muscle due to inaction. C: disorientation caused by a lack of sleep.

14. gristle – A: tough, fibrous matter in meats. B: sand used in glass-making. C: abrasive wool.

15. crapulous – A: soiled. B: overly indulgent in alcohol. C: disbelieving.

Answers

1. lugubrious – [B] exaggeratedly mournful. The book's lugubrious prose filled Bob with sadness.

2. putrid – [C] foul. The rotting meat had a putrid smell.

3. cacophony – [A] discordant mixture of sounds. The cacophony in the hall was so great that Tarik removed his hearing aid.

4. viscous – [B] sticky. Five minutes on the stove rendered the oatmeal viscous and ready to eat for breakfast.

5. jowl – [B] lower part of the cheek. Roland's jowls became the most prominent feature of his face as he got older.

6. maggot – [A] soft-bodied, legless grub. The young girl was fascinated to find hundreds of maggots crawling on the animal carcass.

7. crepuscular – [B] relating to twilight. The evening horizon held a crepuscular beauty that made Farida long for home.

8. wimple – [C] cloth headdress. Sister Anne patiently explained to the class that not all nuns wear a wimple and that her own order merely called for tying the hair back.

9. fester – [A] get worse through neglect. Alison allowed her mild annoyance at Janet to fester until she became angry.

10. squab – [A] sofa. Exhausted, Anu stretched out on the squab and took a short nap.

11. fecund – [B] fruitful. The landscape was fecund with berry bushes.

12. curd – [C] thick substance that forms when milk sours. Yoghurt can be used in the recipe if curd is not available.

13. seepage – [A] slow escape of a liquid or gas through porous material. When the old tank cracked, there was substantial seepage of oil into the garden.

14. gristle – [A] tough, fibrous matter in meats. Jason trimmed the gristle from the steaks before putting them on the barbecue.

15. crapulous – [B] overly indulgent in alcohol. The crapulous trio of friends stumbled down the street to find another bar.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

7-10: Fair

11-12: Good

13-15: Word Power Wizard

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